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TRACTS FOR THE 1848  
PEOPLE.

BY SOSTHENES.

THOUGHTS

ON THE

LATE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE.

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## THOUGHTS ON THE LATE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE.

**THERE** is just now\* a comparative lull in the political tempest. At least we do not hear of a new revolution every day. It cannot indeed be said that the political earthquake has yet subsided. Its vibrations are still felt in every part of Europe: and every day we may expect a new shock of it in France. Let us, however, look round and consider the devastation which it has already caused in that devoted country.

What meets the eye at the first glance is a flourishing and wealthy nation turned upside down from its very foundation, a powerful monarchy laid prostrate, a monarchy the destinies of which had been guided for many years by one to whom credit was given for much political sagacity: fenced in, as it was supposed, by a numerous army, supported by enormous revenues—this we see in one day crumbled to the dust—the king, the royal family, the members of the government dispersed in all directions; the helm seized by a knot of men, who were before of little account as politicians, some scarcely heard of—these men undertaking the task of reconstructing society on a new basis, never before tried in the world, while two hundred thousand citizens with muskets in their hands, and many of them without a sou in their pockets, are watching the Government as a cat watches a mouse, letting them go on for a little while, but ready to pounce on them the instant they go beyond the bounds, which her majesty the mob has prescribed. Meanwhile credit is hopelessly ruined: all persons who have anything to lose are rapidly leaving Paris, in anticipation of a terrible conflict of classes: the funds of the poor, lodged in Savings' Banks, are appropriated by the Government: the mass of the workmen, labourers, artisans, and servants are thrown out of employment, or employed at the public expense, by means of heavy taxes laid on the middle and upper classes, who are rapidly becoming insolvent; and what is perhaps the most formidable thing of all, a number of revolutionary clubs assembling night by night, to listen to the speeches of enthusiasts and fanatics, who already speak of community of goods, and threaten a general scramble for property; already cry out, "A bas les riches," "Mort aux propriétaires:" (Down with the rich, death to proprietors or owners of property.) In short, the spectacle we behold is an eminently prosperous and powerful nation reduced in a few weeks to a state of poverty and internal discord, with the probability of going through the

\* Easter, 1848.

same scenes, which have rendered the first French Revolution synonymous with everything that is most calamitous and horrible in human history.

It may be safely said that there is not a sensible man of any class in France, be he rich or poor, who does not say, in the bitterness of his heart, What enormous fools, what dolts and idiots, what cowards we have been, to suffer this state of things to arise! But it is now too late: the thing is done: the mob will not yield up their arms: they are, in fact, the ruling power: a pure democracy, and something more, must be tried.

We can compare France in her present state to nothing more fitly, than to a strong man in robust health who should deliver up his living body to a set of experimental quacks, and allow them to try on him some new system of treatment, before unheard of in this world, in order that the rest of mankind might benefit by the trial.

If the English people are as wise as they are reputed to be, they will look well to all the circumstances of this famous revolution, that they may prevent the possibility of anything like it happening here. We are perhaps too apt to think that the circumstances of our own country are so different from those of France, and the temper of our people so unlike, that we have nothing to fear. Many of our circumstances are indeed very different, and deeply thankful ought we to be that at present there exists in the nation a determination to put down disorder and maintain the institutions of the country. Still the English, like other nations, are not exempt from periodical fits of excitement. And there are a good many points of resemblance between the condition of this country and that of France, which we shall do well to consider: and there are some evils which it will be necessary for us to remedy, before we have a right to think ourselves quite secure from revolution.

Every one knows that the immediate cause of the break up of the French nation was a reform banquet, which was intended to be held by the liberal party, and was prohibited by the Government. That is what appears on the surface, but let us look more closely at the springs of these political events. There were in the French Chamber of Deputies, as there are generally in our own Parliament, two parties,—the Ins, and the Outs; those who enjoyed power and office, and those who wanted to turn them out and get in themselves. M. Guizot was at the head of the Ins, and M. Barrot at the head of the Outs. According to the then existing constituency M. Guizot's party were likely to remain in office as long as they chose, and M. Barrot's party seemed hopelessly excluded. Therefore M. Barrot called out loudly for an alteration or reform in the constituency; and

being unable to accomplish his purpose in the Chambers, he resorted to the perilous expedient of agitating the masses. Now there is no one point in politics that English people ought to look at more closely than this system of agitating the masses; and endeavouring to accomplish objects by a pressure from without. Every one admits that Englishmen have a perfect right to express their opinion upon public measures, and petition Parliament for what they want: and a most important right it is, and one that has great influence; the more perhaps when it is the spontaneous and decided expression of feeling than when it is factitiously excited. But like all other privileges, and everything else connected with human affairs, it is liable to vicious excess. When a party in the country set themselves to get up an agitation, by publishing violent statements, spreading calumnies against their opponents, exciting and inflaming the multitude; and when they proceed to collect them together in masses, under the plea of discussing political matters, then they go beyond the fair and legitimate means of political warfare, they strain the constitution perilously, and place the country in jeopardy. We know something of the sort of agitation, by our experience of the times of the Reform agitation, which was, in many respects, analogous to the recent movement in Paris. I am one of those who thought the Reform Bill a just and proper measure: and wished it to be passed. But I am sure no true lover of his country will ever wish again to see a political measure carried by the same means. Certainly after the experience which we have had of recent revolutions effected in a couple of days or less, by means of popular excitement; he must be a madman or a traitor who should again foment such an agitation. The country might not again endure such a trial of its stability.

Probably the French reformers supposed that the same sort of agitation which had succeeded in this country, would answer with them. Their object was just to get up a row enough to effect such a reform as would bring them into power. They had found that it helped them in their agitation to have what they termed Reform Banquets, that is, all the people in a place who were for Reform, feasted together, and made speeches and so forth. A good many of these banquets had been held in the provinces; and the Government had taken no steps to prevent them. But when a monster Banquet was proposed in Paris, the Government fearful that it would lead to a breach of the peace, and loss of life, declared that it must not take place. At least they refused to allow processions which might cause a disturbance. They were willing that the reformers should meet for the mere purposes of a feast; and that the legality of the meeting, which had been denied by the law officers of the Government, should be

tried in a Court of Justice. This every one must admit was reasonable; but the more violent of the Reformers would not hear of this pacific mode of deciding the question—they resolved that the meeting should take place at all risks, and be attended not only by three thousand persons whose names had been set down, but that ten thousand of the National Guards, and six thousand Students should be present; besides the probability of the whole mob of Paris gathering to the same place. On these accounts the Government declared that the Banquet should not be permitted, and now at length the promoters of it gave it up.

In fact M. Odillon Barrot and his party had got frightened.—Their object was to get up just such an agitation as would oust the Ministry and procure a reform; and seeing a greater agitation than they intended, they desired to back out of the scrape. But there were others in the background who had very different views. Their object was not to upset the Ministry, but the Monarchy. Barrot and his party were but tools in their hands; mere men of straw put forward in the front rank; and when they refused to go on, it was necessary to go on without them.

Though the banquet was given up by the Reformers, the insurrection aimed at by the revolutionists was not abandoned. About midday on Tuesday the 22nd of February, the mob collected from all the Faubourgs of Paris, parading the streets, in a menacing and alarming attitude; presently the *gamins* or young vagabonds began to throw stones at the houses of the obnoxious members of the Government: next they dragged an unpopular deputy from his carriage, and “gave him a good shaking.”

These proceedings, of course, called for the interference of the police. When the police is supported by the respectable members of the community, they are commonly able to suppress mere mischievous outrage. But here the middle classes culpably allowed these outrages to go on. So the people began to construct barricades, laying violent hands on omnibuses and carriages of all descriptions, tearing up the pavement, pulling down shop fronts and shutters; and in preventing these outrages, collisions took place between the people and the Municipal Guards. On the next day, Wednesday, the rioting increased, and the National Guards, consisting of the respectable citizens of Paris, were called out. This was the crisis of the movement. Had the National Guard repressed the growing outrages, all might have been saved, for the people were imperfectly armed; whereas the National Guards were well supplied with weapons. In not declaring themselves on the side of order, the National Guards, i.e. the middle classes of Paris, have drawn upon themselves all the responsibility of the Revolution. Whatever it may cost them,—the ruin, the confiscation, the massacre, which it may eventually

cause,—it is all their own fault, because they did not do their duty. They suffered outrages that they might have prevented, and now they have no power to defend even their own persons or property. Meanwhile, the excitement waxed stronger. Several collisions had taken place between the people and the soldiers. In the *Marché des Innocens* and the *Rue S. Denis*, blood had been shed.

At about half-past four it was announced that the King had dismissed his Ministers, and that Reform would be granted. The news was spread quickly through Paris, and the rioting abated; there was a lull in the storm; the people had gained their point, and the promoters of the banquet which had caused this disturbance were in a fair way of compassing their political object. The Reform would no doubt raise them to rank and office. So far, then, the plans of those who caused the excitement had been most successful. True that some twenty or thirty persons had been killed, and a great many more wounded. Men had been sent to their last account, in the midst of mad excitement. Several innocent children and women had been sacrificed in the tumult. But what was that to the politician? a few score of plebeian lives were not to be set in the balance against the grand political object gained,—the humbling of Louis Philippe, the manifestation that the people were determined to have their own way, not to speak of the probable elevation of themselves to power and office. What was the violent death of a score or two of men, women, and children, in comparison with objects like these?

Such was the position of M. Odillon Barrot and his party at the end of the second day. Triumphant politicians, who thought they could ride on the storm which they had raised, and be worshipped as gods and heroes!

But it was not the intention of Him Who rules the earth, that events should take exactly the course which these politicians intended. "Man proposes; God disposes." They had sown to the storm, they must reap the whirlwind.

In the evening of the second day, when the excitement was subsiding, there occurred an incident, which, by the common agreement of all persons, changed the whole character of the movement, and, eventually, the destinies of Europe. A body of troops was drawn up in front of M. Guizot's house, the *Hotel des Affaires Etrangères*, to protect it from pillage. A large and, as it is stated, an organized mob, was gathered around it, but had not dared to assail the troops. At this moment, a man stepped from the crowd, and, walking up to the officer in command, deliberately blew out his brains with a pistol. Whereupon the soldiers seeing their leader basely murdered, levelled their

muskets and fired a volley upon the mob, by which a good many were killed or wounded. This is the account given in the *Times*. Some accounts say that the first shot was fired by accident, and broke the leg of the officer's horse; upon which he gave the command to fire, with the result that has been mentioned. Whichever version be the true one, it is manifest that the first shot was fired in this place by the people, and the troops supposing themselves attacked, returned the fire as a measure of self-defence.

All accounts allow that this incident gave a new turn to the whole affair. The tumult, which was beginning to subside, again broke out with redoubled violence. The dead bodies were placed half naked in carts, and carried by the populace with blazing torches, through the different quarters of the town, amidst the cries of

“ Mourir pour la patrie  
C'est le sort le plus beau, le plus digne de l'envie.”\*

A sort of phrenzy and fanaticism was excited by these means, which led to the most fearful results.

Now, this is a point of the narrative which deserves the closest attention. It is all very well to say it was an untoward accident, a great misfortune, or even a judgment of Providence. But it is not a maxim of sensible men, that things cannot be helped. If these immense mobs had not been got together, this accident would not have taken place—the judgment would have been averted. Therefore, those who got the mobs together were the causes of it. A party in the Chamber of Deputies, as we have seen, for their own objects—be they good or bad, it matters not—cause a violent ferment in men's minds. Their object, probably, is no more than to oust their opponents, and get into their places, or, at the best, to gain a favourite political object. They have no notion of utterly subverting society from its very foundation, and raising a tempest which will render the whole generation in which they live turbulent and inquiet, perhaps cost hundreds and thousands of lives. When making preparation for their banquet, and issuing their orders for processions of National Guards and students, and preparing their speeches, and anticipating the applause with which they should be greeted, and the honour which they should gain,—and possibly the advantage too, in stepping into the places of their rivals in power—they little thought that they were doing the devil's work—preparing a mine which was to explode and convulse the world.

May we in England be wise enough to profit by this example, and take a lesson which may last us our lives, and inculcate the

\* To die for our country is the finest and most enviable lot.

same on our children after us. Our own form of government—excellent as it is in many respects—has in it this essential evil, that there is a perpetual contest for power; and it is always for the apparent advantage of the expectant minority to be raising cavils against those in office, spreading calumnies, accusing them of incompetency, malversation, seeking to *excite* just so much of popular discontent as shall transfer to themselves the reins of power. This is the game of our Humes and Cohdens. They are continually cavilling and objecting, poisoning the minds of men, raising suspicions and dislikes, causing them to grumble and be dissatisfied. It is unquestionable that there are and must be always abuses and blunders in every government; but this is no reason why the whole system should be condemned, and violently uprooted. Louis Philippe's government might have been objectionable in many ways. Still, no one can deny that under it the French nation made greater advances in wealth and prosperity than it had ever done before. Never was France so formidable abroad, so prosperous at home. There is no pretence of personal oppression; you hear of no person deprived of life, liberty, or property, under Louis Philippe's government; there were no Bastilles, or *lettres de cachet*; no charge of tyranny. What, then, was the justice of raising against it this violent ferment? So, at home, we have perfect security of life, property, and liberty, the general system is favourable to the development of the wealth and prosperity of the country. There are blemishes, to which we shall advert presently; but they are not such as can be remedied by a violent excision. We ought, therefore, always to suspect those persons in Parliament, or out of it, who raise cavils, and foster discontent.

And, especially when such persons appeal to the passions of the people, they ought to be discountenanced and condemned by all honest men. We have had some narrow escapes. Political agitation may be excited once too often, and men, intending like M. Thiers and Odillon Barrot merely to carry a political point, may one day upset the government, and spread anarchy and blood through the land.

We ought also to remember that, however fair may be the surface of society, there is always mischief under ground. The power of numbers is always there. A child may drive a herd of oxen day by day to the pasture in safety; but there is always the possibility of some mad excitement arising, and the whole herd, urged by some sudden fury or terror, rushing violently back and trampling him under foot. God has given to beasts an instinct which ordinarily prevents them from resisting the hand of man: so He has given reason to nations, which teaches them that their happiness is to preserve peace, and that the



subversion of government must cause infinite disaster to themselves. The English people are well aware of this. Still they are not exempt from periodical excitements, which ere now have approached to madness. But woe to him who kindles the flame of national discord.

Such was the case of the Parisian populace after the incident already mentioned. Whether the first shot was fired by accident, or by the hand of a murderous fanatic, or by the deliberate design of some republican partisan, it resulted in the immediate sacrifice of many lives, and exasperation of the people to a high degree. The whole night was passed in erecting barricades and obtaining arms; so that when the day dawned they were prepared to fight after the most approved Parisian fashion. The bull fights with his horns, the tiger with his claws, the ass with his heels, and the Parisian mob with its barricades. A barricade is a heap of paving stones, omnibuses, and cabs, behind which the mob protect themselves, so that they may fire upon the soldiers without being hurt themselves; and if the soldiers come up and take the barricade, then the mob run away and hide themselves behind another. So there is no great courage in fighting behind barricades after all.

It is said that Marshal Bugeaud, who had the command of the troops, undertook to force the barricades and restore order. But Odillon Barrot and Thiers, who were now the King's ministers, refused to allow him, and ordered the troops to be withdrawn. They thought, no doubt, that their names were all-powerful with the people, that their voice would be obeyed, and the storm which they had raised would subside at their bidding. Never were men more mistaken. The mob, finding themselves unopposed, and being supplied with arms and ammunition, even by the soldiers themselves, proceeded to do as they listed. The first object of their attack was the Palais Royal, the property of Louis Philippe. This was defended for some time by the guards placed within; but the overwhelming numbers of the mob prevailed, the palace was taken, and, to use the forcible expression of an eye-witness, was "gutted from garret to cellar." Hence they advanced upon the Tuileries, where a large body of troops was gathered amounting to five or six thousand men.

There is little doubt that even at this time the mob might have been repulsed, if the troops had done their duty. It was almost on the same spot, that on the 12th Vendemiare, in the year 1795, Napoleon, with a body of five thousand men, had calmly awaited the attack of the Parisian populace headed by their National Guards; and by a well-directed fire of grape shot, speedily sent them to the rightabout. But on the present

occasin, no attempt was made even to defend the palace. Whether it was that the troops could not be depended on, or whether there was cowardice and vacillation in the leaders; or whether, as we may well believe, it was that mysterious consciousness, which so often unnerves the arm of the unjust, it is impossible to say. We can well imagine, and it is the most charitable supposition, that Louis Philippe shrunk from the idea of the torrents of blood which must have flowed in order to maintain a throne to which he had no right. He himself was but an usurper, at least he had been raised to the throne by rebellion, and he might naturally feel that the same power which had placed him there had an equal right to dethrone him. Whatever was the cause, whether conscience, cowardice, or treachery, the King abdicated his throne; and on the advance of the people, fled from the palace, and the troops were withdrawn without firing a shot, leaving the mob entire masters of the palace and the city.

One courageous action, indeed, was done on that eventful day. The Duchess of Orleans, with her two children, passed through the angry mob to the Chamber of Deputies, and claimed the throne for her son, who by the abdication of Louis Philippe, had become rightful King according to the then existing laws. And there can be no doubt that the majority of the Chamber would have admitted her claim. But the Deputies had no more authority than the King. They were overawed by a frenzied mob, who pointed muskets at their breasts; and were in fact freed by intimidation from the Chamber, leaving only a few of the more democratic of their members, who, at the dictation of the mob, proclaimed a republic, and voted themselves to be a Provisional Government.

Here is another point at which it may be well to pause and look about us. Odillon Barrot and his friends who had fomented this excitement and suffered it to go on, would now most willingly have supported the regency, extended the suffrage, and formed a new administration. But their voices, so potent in agitation, were powerless to allay the storm; they were swept away in the hurricane—annihilated. Their names have not been mentioned since; as politicians they are, for the present at least, defunct.

This might be a lesson to some of our leading agitators. If they are in truth revolutionists, and desire to wade through blood and ruin to a position like that once occupied by Robespierre, and now by Ledru Rollin and Louis Blanc, let them pursue their present course. But I do not think that Mr. Hume or Mr. Cobden, or even Mr. Feargus O'Connor, have any such blood-thirsty intentions. They would exclaim with Hazael, "Is

thy servant a dog, that he should do such things?" Yet some of these men appear sometimes to show the cloven foot. Cobden especially speaks with a bitterness of those above him which indicates a bad spirit, ripe almost for anything. He seems to aspire to be something greater than he is. He has tasted the sweets of popular applause, but finds that though a great man at a public meeting, there are many in the House of Commons who are more than his equal. He is just the man, in violent times, to bring the influence of the mob to bear on those whom he cannot otherwise get rid of. However, one would not willingly believe that he or any man would deliberately adventure upon the enormous evils which must accompany the overthrow of the English monarchy. Let such persons take warning from the fate of M. Odillon Barrot; let them think of the utter impossibility of saying to what lengths popular fury once aroused will extend. And let them remember that the first leaders of revolution are invariably supplanted by others who with still greater recklessness indulge the popular will.

The Provisional Government, formed out of the dregs of the Chamber of Deputies, was but a puppet in the hands of the populace. On the first meeting at the Hotel de Ville on the day after the insurrection, they were surrounded by armed men, who, on the least hesitation expressed by them to obey their orders, threatened to fling them from the windows. This is but a rude type of their subsequent tenure of office. Since that time to the present the Provisional Government has done little more than register the decrees of the armed populace. They are but tools in their hands; they must execute all the extravagances, all the follies,—yes, and it is to be feared, all the crimes which the people bid them. Theirs is indeed a pitiable state. If, as one would fain hope, they placed themselves in their present position from the patriotic motive of saving their country from anarchy; one must most cordially compassionate them. If, on the other hand, it was owing to their secret contrivance that these terrible events took place; and if, as it has been stated, the list of the Provisional Government was made out, even before the day of the banquet, then it cannot be denied that they will have richly deserved the fate which, if we may judge from the analogy of former times, is probably impending over them, of leading a short, miserable, unquiet life, and falling by an untimely and violent end. We can only hope for better things.

Now let us pause for a moment to consider the character of these transactions. First the public journals, especially those of Paris, loudly vaunt the bravery and generosity of the Parisian people. The people of Paris, say they, roused to indignation by the tyranny of their rulers, (i. e., in prohibiting a banquet

which the law officers declared to be contrary to the charter made by the people themselves,) rose as one man, discomfited a hundred thousand troops, and then returned quietly to their work, as if nothing had happened. Such was the language of the French journals. But nothing can be more contrary to the facts. The French mob got the better simply because no one resisted them. The National Guards either looked on quietly, or stood between them and the soldiers. The soldiers gave them their arms and ammunition. There was positively no serious opposition to the movement, except from the small body of the Municipal Guards. It may safely be said, judging from all precedent, that the National Guards could, if they had chosen, at any time have put down the insurrection: or even had they kept out of the way, five thousand troops could have done it without the slightest difficulty. The revolution was caused simply and solely by licence being allowed to an exasperated mob of workmen.

And so far from this revolution being a proof of the bravery of the French people, it is rather a proof of their cowardice. It is quite certain that the vast body of the middle classes altogether disapproved of a republic; but they had not the nerve or the spirit to check the progress of the mob. The large majority of the Chamber of Deputies succumbed to the tyranny of a hundred or two of armed men who burst into the place where they were sitting: and there is no question that the apparent unanimity with which the republic was hailed, arose not from any general approval of such a scheme, but from the fact that those who disapproved were afraid to express their dissent. It was a reign of terror from the beginning.

Nor is the generosity of the people more to be commended than their bravery. The only men who opposed them, the Municipal Guards, were butchered without mercy. In one instance the mob set fire to a guard house opposite to the Palais Royal, containing about a hundred of these unfortunate men, and either shot them as they rushed forth to save themselves from the flames, or burnt them alive amidst the most savage yells. When no further resistance was offered, and none remained on whom to wreak their vengeance, the bloodthirstiness of the people fortunately took a new direction. Any wretch who was caught pilfering was placed on his knees and summarily shot. In one case no less than eight of these miserable creatures were, after a mock trial, thus disposed of. The fact of these mob-executions shows that pillage was extensive, while the summary and illegal mode of dealing with the depredators, indicates far more a love of blood than of justice. What right had these men to massacre thieves? Was there any law to put to death the

stealer of a silver spoon? If Louis Philippe had committed such an act of severity, what words would have been sufficient to express the indignation at his cruelty?

There was also a disposition in the journals to make light of the mischief done, and the outrages committed. According to some of them, when the fighting was over, the people quietly went back to their work, and all that was necessary was to set omnibuses on their wheels, and replace the paving stones in their former position. But the shooting of so many thieves is conclusive evidence that considerable pillage took place even in Paris, besides the destruction of printing presses and other property. While, however, they were shooting thieves in Paris, great outrages were being committed in the surrounding district, which spread to the other great towns. Bands of brigands went through the country, committing all sorts of crime with impunity. The house of Baron Rothschild in the neighbourhood of Paris was sacked and burnt to the ground. The chateau of Neuilly was similarly treated. And here a shocking incident occurred. A number of rioters got into the cellars of the chateau, and being soon in a state of brutal intoxication, began to fight, and inflict savage wounds on each other with the broken bottles. In this shocking state they were unaware of the fire raging over their heads, and to the number of a hundred and twenty were suffocated in the cellars. Besides these attacks on houses, immense damage was done to the railroads—many of the stations and bridges were consumed by fire. At Rouen, when the bridge was burnt, care was taken by the incendiaries that no signal should be given to the approaching train: and had not the engineer fortunately perceived the still smoking embers of the bridge in time, a monster train full of English would have been precipitated into the river.

All these are very shocking circumstances. The only wonder is that they were not a great deal worse than they were. But even these are sufficient to show that property was not so secure even at the time, as was asserted. Perhaps it was only saved then to be wasted by a slower process of confiscation and exaction. However, we in England should do well to consider what would be the state of things with us, if similar events occurred, and law and government should be put down. I have the highest respect for the English character, and believe the people generally to be honest and intelligent. Still it cannot be denied that there are amongst us a very great number of thieves and ruffians, who would avail themselves of any disturbance or suspension of the power of the law, to commit the most fearful havoc. The mischievousness of the mob in London and at

Glasgow, is sufficient evidence of the temper of some amongst our lower classes. These things are very unpleasant to dwell on, but they should not be kept back. When we see, even in comparatively peaceable times, the vast number of trials recorded in the public journals, for murders, rapes, assaults, misdemeanours, robberies, it is but too manifest that if authority were put down, the most fearful calamities would fall upon multitudes of peaceful families. And this not only in the great towns. In these there would be a sharp contest, and much destruction and plunder, while it lasted; but whichever side prevailed, would probably after the contest endeavour to restore order. The great evil to be dreaded would be from bands of plunderers, who would scour the country for pillage like a pack of hungry wolves. No corner of the land would be safe. Even now terrible scenes of disorder are being enacted in parts of France and Germany. We do not think that the country people in England would rise with such sanguinary ferocity as the French peasantry did in the first revolution, when the cry was, "guerre aux châteaux," (war against the gentlemen's houses). But we fear there are in a great many places savage and demoralized men, who would band together and commit terrible excesses of every kind against the property and persons of the upper and middle classes who should fall into their hands. Plunderers of this description would have little respect for classes or opinions. Their sole object would be to gratify their love of rapine and excess. Men of liberal politics would fare no better with such persons than conservatives. The middle classes would suffer as much as the upper. The farmer's homestead or the tradesman's villa would be as liable to depredation as the gentleman's seat; perhaps more so, as being more unprotected. In short, if government were upset in England, the most fearful anarchy would prevail throughout the land; and the anarchy would be increased tenfold by the commercial panic which would at once arise. All our credit would collapse like a punctured balloon—our paper currency would be good for nothing. Property of this kind would cease to exist. The necessary consequence would be that manufactures and trades would come to a stand, servants would be discharged, the great mass of the working community would be without employment, and consequently without bread. Savings banks would be bankrupt; railroad shares and canal shares worthless. There would be a general scramble for food and gold. The ruin would be much greater in England than in any other country in the world, in proportion to our dependence on credit, and the vast number of our population employed by fictitious capital.

The certainty of the occurrence of such a state of things in

the event of a violent revolution, is tolerably well understood not only by the possessors of property, but by the workmen themselves. There is enough of intelligence amongst them to show them, that if the physical force gentlemen were to get the upper hand in England, and effect a revolution, it would bring down irretrievable ruin on the heads of every class of the community, from the millionaire capitalist down to the pauper in the work-house—for even he would lose the maintenance which the law now secures to him. There is another thing which the men of physical force ought to be aware of, and that is that it can never be in England as in France, that a revolution will be accomplished after a “glorious three days’ fight.” Those who have anything to lose, have shown their determination not to part with it if they can help it. They are resolved to stand up for their hearths and homes, their families and property. If the physical force men obtained even a temporary success, it would kindle a civil war in every county in the land. Supposing even that they succeeded in some of the great towns, each corps of county yeomanry would form a nucleus round which would gather an army for the defence of our institutions. Even should the Chartists get possession of London, that would not give them the command of the provinces, any more than it did to those who rebelled against King Charles two hundred years ago. In short, if the physical force men were to succeed in kindling a civil war, great as must be the suffering of the whole nation, they would possibly be no nearer the accomplishment of their object than they were before.

All classes in England, except those who are blinded by a republican fanaticism, are more or less aware of these circumstances, and we may trust will continue, as they are at present determined, to protect themselves from the ruin which must ensue if public order were broken.

But alas! these are but secondary motives after all. The fear of personal suffering, the apprehension of loss of property, domestic calamity, a life of danger and difficulty, perhaps a violent and miserable death, these are indeed cogent reasons for standing up for the maintenance of public order. But to give the noblest and the most effectual stimulus to our zeal, we want more of the spirit of loyalty and patriotism; not a mere carefulness for our own private interests, but a determination to maintain the rights of our Sovereign, and the institutions of our country.

Loyalty is a far nobler and more effectual spirit than conservatism. Yet it must not be supposed that they are necessarily distinct. We are exhorted by the highest authority that “first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”

Yes—the support of our Sovereign and our institutions, is not only a duty which we owe to her and to our country, but also one that we shall do well to abide by for our own sake. The peculiar judgment which falls on the rebellious and disobedient, is an unquiet, restless, harassed life, accompanied with fearful sufferings and temptations to the most dreadful crimes. But the sure reward of obedience to law, and maintenance of authority, is a quiet life of peaceful virtue and domestic happiness.

There is another very important topic which deserves our serious consideration, that is, the duty which we owe to the poor. There can be no doubt that the working classes of England are not in the condition that they should be in, either morally or physically. Whatever danger there may be of national disaster arises from this cause. If, therefore, we would ensure domestic peace, we must make without delay some great efforts to improve the condition of the people. Even if we feel ourselves secure against the effects of their lawlessness, still every charitable and generous feeling of humanity ought to urge us to do all we can to remedy the crying evils which abound.

But on this subject, and on the general condition of the working classes, I hope to speak more at large on another occasion.



# TRACTS FOR THE PEOPLE.

BY SOSTHENES.

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COMMUNISM AND CHARTISM.

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## COMMUNISM AND CHARTISM.

THE recent upsetting of the social system of France, which has already caused so much misery in that country, and is pregnant with every imaginable calamity, was brought about by the agency and instrumentality of about twenty or five-and-twenty thousand work-people, some of them out of employ, and consequently wanting bread; others in good employ, and wanting only more tobacco, more brandy, more beer, more money to gratify their excesses, and less work; others, again, not knowing what they wanted:—these, beaded by certain fanatics of Republicanism, were the instruments by whom the work was done.

But how, it may well be asked, came it to pass that such men as these were able to accomplish their purpose in a great and wealthy city, and in the face of a numerous army, as well as an armed *bourgeoisie*—a National Guard consisting principally of the citizens of Paris, who are all ruined, or nearly so, by what has taken place?

Simply because the citizens of the middle class took no means to prevent the mischief, and either looked on or helped in the work. And the reason of their acting in this strange manner was partly a political discontent which had been fostered by a set of politicians for their own purposes, and partly sheer cowardice and want of resolution to stand up manfully against outrage.

So, then, the revolution was caused by the concurrent circumstances of a needy and demoralized populace, and a disaffected and vacillating middle and upper class. It does not necessarily require the concurrence of both these causes to make a revolution. Disaffection to a government, dislike of national institutions may of itself cause revolution,—as in the case of some of the German States. On the other hand, there may be countries in which the condition of the lower classes shall have become so bad, that they shall be able to cause a revolution in spite of the middle classes. And this is the most dreadful revolution of all.

In a former Tract\* I have adverted to the circumstances which caused the disaffection of the middle and upper classes in France, and have thrown out some cautions against the indulgence of similar factious feelings amongst ourselves. In the present, I propose to treat of the condition of the lower classes.

It is not to be denied that the condition of the lower classes in this country is anything but what it ought to be; and this not

\* See Tract I. Thoughts on the late Revolution in France.

altogether from their own fault. There might be more done for them than there is. I should be the last to say a word that might promote discontent or ill-feeling in the poor towards those above them; but it is hopeless to expect that proper steps will be taken to remedy the evils that surround us, if the evils are denied or supposed to be irremediable. The most obvious evil which meets the eye is the poverty, squalor, and misery of many of the poor in our great towns, and in some of our agricultural districts—the want of clothes, want of decent houses, sometimes even want of food. It is indeed a well-ascertained fact, that in many cases, this poverty is not the result of insufficient wages: because families whose wages average from thirty to fifty shillings weekly, are, from intemperance and improvidence, often as squalid and miserable as any. But what, let us ask, is the cause of this improvidence and intemperance? Surely the want of proper instruction and guidance, the neglect and carelessness of those above them to bring them to a better condition. It is not to be denied, moreover, that there are many whose wages are insufficient for their decent maintenance. And this state of things arises sometimes from competition and a superabundance of hands beyond the means of employment: at other times, from fluctuation in trade. It is the fashion to speak of these things as irremediable. If this be true, if the immorality and squalid poverty of the people be indeed an irremediable evil, we can never be safe from violent commotion, if not disruption of society. We may go on awhile longer, but some conjunction of events will one day upset our system, as it has done that of France. We hope, however, to show, that though it is indeed hopeless to remove the evils altogether, because “the poor shall never cease out of the land,” yet they may be extensively mitigated and amended.

First let us consider the notions on the subject, which are floating in the minds of the working classes themselves, and the means by which they hope to improve their condition.

One theory of theirs is Socialism—which is much the same as what they call in France Communism.

We do not hear so much indeed of the Socialists as a body as we used to do; but their opinions are current among the people, and indeed have much to do with Chartism. The great principle of Socialism, or Communism, is this, that whereas the ordinary practice under the present system is that there should be masters and workmen, capitalists and operatives, employers and employed, payers of wages and receivers of wages,—instead of these there shall be neither masters who pay, nor workmen who receive, wages, but that all shall form a sort of community or partnership, and share the profits amongst them.

There were many other strange notions broached by the Socialists, such as community of wives, as well as other things, but the main principle which is to be considered is that above mentioned.

Let us compare the Socialist scheme with the system under which we live. It is, I believe, a well-ascertained fact, that most of the present master manufacturers, are men who either themselves or their forefathers have sprung from the ranks of operatives. A workman with more skill, or good management, or self-denial than his brethren contrives to get together a little money. What others spend in the beer shop or the gin palace he puts into the savings' bank. A skilful artisan's wages husbanded prudently will, with the accumulating interest, soon amount to a considerable sum. When he has got together a few hundreds, he takes it out of the savings' bank, and invests it in some prudent speculation. Prudence and foresight ensure success, and in course of time he finds himself possessed of a moderate fortune, which, in consequence of his thoughts having been so long directed to the business in which he has himself laboured, he invests in a manufactory; and so, from having been a workman, he finds himself a master. Continuing fortunate and prudent, he becomes a rich man, and perhaps he purchases a landed property, and makes his eldest son a squire, while the second son continues a master manufacturer. The squire, perhaps, becomes a baronet; in another generation the family becomes ennobled, and the head of it takes his seat amongst the aristocracy of the land. We believe that a great number of instances might be mentioned, in which workmen have thus risen to eminence. The Arkwright and the Peel family are perhaps the most remarkable instances. But a very large proportion of respectable and opulent families have been founded in this manner, not to speak of those who, from being originally workmen without any capital but their labour, have come to be foremen, managers, engineers, and so forth, and live in comparative comfort and respectability. It may also be said with truth, that every workman of good character and conduct may at least, unless he have very ill luck indeed, obtain good wages and live in comfort. It is his own fault, almost universally, if he does not.

The Socialist or Communist system is altogether different. A number of men are to work and live together, and share the profits equally; there is no scope for superior skill, nor encouragement to superior industry. A man could never be a master manufacturer, or rise above the station of workman. The idle, and stupid, and dissolute would have the same advantages as the industrious and well-conducted. This is the system which

the Communists wish to introduce. But it is easy to see at a glance that it must at once annihilate that spirit of enterprise and industry which has made England the great nation which she is. There is no denying, indeed, that it is very possible for men to be too ambitious, too thrifty, and covetous: that is a great fault. Still the desire which exists in the breast of the honest working man to better his condition, to gather comforts around him, to see his family better fed, better lodged, to secure an independence for his old age, and a competence for his children after him—this surely is an honourable motive, and has led to the enterprise and energy which has enabled England to take its place amongst the first of nations.

All this would be utterly done away with by the Communist plan. The whole community of workmen, and their children after them, would be mere machines, tied down all their lives to the same dull routine, without the hope of bettering their condition.

However, if any persons prefer the Communist system, there is nothing whatever to prevent them from adopting it. A hundred, or a thousand, or ten thousand families may form this sort of partnership if they choose; only do not let them want to force others to adopt it, who believe they shall do better by continuing as they are. If their experiment succeeds, no doubt others will follow their example. But at present the large majority of persons would consider the Communist system an intolerable burden and restraint upon their free agency; they would much prefer to go on upon the old system, under which each individual works for himself and his family; and while the intemperate and improvident remain poor and depressed, the industrious and well-conducted are sure to obtain a comfortable livelihood, and have the chance of raising themselves to the highest places in the social scale.

The next plan that I shall consider, by which the poor seek to better their condition, is Chartism, the leading point of which is universal suffrage. They imagine that under the present representative system, by which a qualification is required of the voter, those who are unqualified, and therefore without votes, have not their interests rightly attended to, and that the remedy for this would be, that every man should be admitted to the right of suffrage.

This is a plausible system, but only at first sight. If we look to the history of our constitution, we shall see that *the suffrage has never been considered as a personal and inherent right derived from nature, but a privilege or trust conferred by law.* The great value of our present system is, that it has grown up gradually, and from age to age adapted itself to the wants and

circumstances of the people. When Parliaments were first assembled, the King issued his writs to certain places to send knights of the shire and burgesses to consult with him on the wants of the nation. And there was often great reluctance in persons so summoned to avail themselves of the right conferred on them. In process of time the privilege was more appreciated, and defined, and the constituency was fixed by law. Thus has been formed our present constitution, which gives the right of making and amending the laws to the three estates of the realm, including the Commons' House of Parliament, the members of which are returned by those on whom the law of the land confers this privilege or trust.

The last great settlement of the constituency was at the time of the Reform Bill in 1831; which was certainly passed with the approval of the large majority of the nation. And by that bill the same principle is recognised, viz. that the right of voting is to be limited, as it always has been in England, and indeed in every other nation, to those on whom the law confers it. *It is not a matter of right but of law.* The Reform Bill is the law under which we are now living. Of course its provisions may be altered, but any alteration will be made, not with reference to the abstract or philosophical notion of an inherent right of suffrage in each individual, but according to what appears likely to be most advantageous to the interests of the country at large. The claim of universal suffrage as a right is evidently quite contrary to the received usages of the English nation for a long course of ages, and opposed to the deliberately expressed wishes of the people at the last settlement of the Reform Bill.

It is also opposed to the true interests of the country, and subversive of justice between class and class. The Chartists themselves will probably agree in this principle, that the true use of representation is, that the interests of all classes may be duly considered. No one class should be oppressed by the others. The well-being of all should be taken care of. Now this I am prepared to show would not be the case under a system of universal suffrage. It is manifest that, if all persons had equal votes, the poorer classes, being a great deal more numerous than the richer, would return all the representatives; the richer and middle classes would have no chance of being represented; their votes would be so few in comparison with the rest, that their interests would be set aside. But it is essential for the well-being of the nation that property should be protected, not only for the sake of the employers, but the employed, the poor as well as the rich. If capital were not protected, employment would cease, and society fall into disorder.

It would never do, therefore, to have the interests of all classes placed in the hands of one class, and that the lowest.

Suppose, for instance, what is not very unlikely, that the members of Parliament, elected exclusively by the working classes, and representing their views, were to take off the duties from spirits and tobacco, and place it all on wine—wine would become so dear that scarcely any would be drunk, and so the revenue of the country derived from the excise would cease. In order to obviate this, suppose they were to put a large increase of the income tax upon the rich. Then in proportion they would take away from the rich the power of giving employment to the people; for it ought to be borne in mind that almost the whole income of the rich is expended, directly or indirectly, in the payment of the wages of labour. The rich, therefore, thus heavily hurdened, would employ so much less labour. And consequently in proportion as the workmen were benefited (in their own estimation) by getting more spirits and tobacco, in like proportion would labourers be thrown out of employ. This is a specimen of the disadvantages which would arise from class legislation.

In France, where the lower classes at present have their own way, and rule over the rest, the most tyrannical proceedings are going on. Not only do the workpeople in some of the factories fix their own wages and hours of work, but they will not allow their masters to give up business, though the expenses are greater than the profits. Their object is to live upon their masters' capital as long as it lasts, and then they must all starve together. Others force the landlords to lower the rents of their houses, on pain of having their own houses pulled down and pillaged. And the Government set up by the people are actually contemplating the seizure of the property of railroads, and other speculations, on their own terms, and for their own use, against the wishes of the owners. This is the sort of tyranny which is exercised, when the balance of power is destroyed, and one class lords it over the rest.

In England all classes are represented, and the interests of all are perhaps as fairly looked to as they can be in this imperfect world. The counties send members who represent the landed interest, the great towns those that represent the manufacturers; the small towns hold the balance between them. And as in large constituencies the ten-pound household suffrage embraces the great hulk of the community, there is no lack of persons to represent the feelings of the lower classes. It is very desirable indeed that the working classes should have a sufficient number of persons in Parliament to represent their interests. But it

would be a strange House of Commons in which *all* the members were Wakleys and Duncombes.

In every system of human laws or society, there must needs be a large amount of anomalies which should be gradually amended: but we think it may easily be shown that the tendency of the present course of legislation in this country, is to regard not only the interests but even the prejudices of the poor. Let us consider one or two of the most recent measures of Parliament. The repeal of the Corn Laws for instance. It was argued that the effect of the old corn laws was to increase the cost of bread to the poor, and keep up the rent of the landlords. Constant discussions took place on the subject for several years. The advocates of the corn laws contended that it would be dangerous if this country did not in the main support itself in the great article of food—that if we got our corn from abroad, our own lands would go out of tillage, and our labourers lose their employment; that the home trade would suffer in proportion as the foreign trade was benefited. No one can deny that there was a good deal to be said on this side of the question. Still the arguments of repealers of the corn laws, especially the assertion that the poor would get their bread cheaper, prevailed. Many even of the landlords voted for the repeal, and it was carried.

Take another instance. It was found two years ago that the finances were insufficient for the increased expenditure of the country, occasioned principally by the extension of our empire in different quarters of the world. The Ministry thought it a good opportunity to introduce a new principle of taxation. Many duties which had been levied on articles consumed by the poor, and increased their cost, were taken off, and a tax imposed on incomes above £150; so that the entire body of the lower classes escape the burden altogether. Will any one say that the interests of the poor have not been consulted in these important measures?

But countless other matters might be named in which the interests of the poor are specially attended to. Every class has its advocates in Parliament. The advocates of the poor are listened to with marked attention, and laws are constantly passed for the express purpose of relieving them. The Ten Hours' Bill exempts children under a certain age from that unremitting labour which exhausted their frame, and allowed them no time for improvement of their minds. The law against the truck system secures the working classes against a mode of extortion by which their wages were diminished, and their liberty interfered with. The poor have full power of meeting together and discussing their grievances, and ample opportunity of expressing their wishes by petition to Parliament; and when they have made



out their case, the Legislature will be found always willing to make laws by which the grievance is remedied.

I think it cannot be doubted that the disposition of the Legislature as at present constituted, is to ameliorate the condition of the poorer classes, and act justly and kindly to them. No accusation can be brought against the present House of Commons, of wilfully neglecting the interest of this portion of the community.

At the same time I am bound to say, that with every wish in the members of the Legislature and in the ruling powers, to improve the condition of the people, much more might be done than is done. But the defect is attributable mainly to the people themselves. Both amongst the working classes and those representatives on the liberal side, whom they consider principally to represent their wants, there is a mistaken notion with regard to their real interests, which is in reality the cause of almost all the evils under which the people labour. *What I allude to is the principle of letting things alone*—the notion that things will adjust and right themselves by the natural process of demand and supply, and that it is no business of the Legislature to interfere between man and man, workmen and employers. Great opposition was made in some quarters to the reduction of the labour of factory children. But if children are protected it is assumed that men at least are able to take care of themselves. This is the principle of Mr. Hume, Mr. Cobden, and other liberals, in whom the poorer classes have been accustomed to place their confidence. The first of these gentlemen is perhaps the very worst style of politician that can be named; and, harrying a few necessary retrenchments in the expenditure, he has, during his long life in Parliament, done more mischief to the poorer classes and to the country generally, than will be easily remedied; and this principally by his notion of leaving every one to take care of himself. This notion has too much influenced our governments; but the theory is beginning to be exploded. I am myself disposed to think that almost all the evils which afflict the people, especially in our great towns; the squalid poverty which abounds; their improvidence and immorality; the evil effects of unlimited competition and gluts in trade; in short all the evils which harass the working classes, are attributable to the doctrine of the liberals, of letting things alone. "What," the liberals would say, "will you have the Government interfere and fix the rate of wages that the master is to pay to his workmen? Will you fetter commerce, which ought to be free as air?" No, I agree with Lord John Russell that non-interference ought to be the general rule, *when things are going on as they should do*; but when evils are manifest, and do not yield to

time, but become day by day more inveterate, then, I say, it is time for rulers to step in; and I am sure that by wise and judicious arrangements, most of the evils which vex the poorer classes might be remedied or very greatly mitigated.

Take first that which would seem the most unmanageable of all, that is, the fluctuation in trade. This the economists will say is not dependent on ourselves. If the home and foreign trade fall off we cannot help it. True, but we may take measures to meet it and mitigate its pressure. Let us take pattern from the conduct of every prudent man. How does a prudent man provide against the evil day, want of employment, decay of health, and other misfortunes? One very common plan is to avail himself of benefit clubs, contributing a small weekly sum when in health, on the condition of drawing out a weekly allowance in case of sickness. The better sort of the working class voluntarily enter into such arrangements. In other cases they are persuaded to do it by the encouragement of charitable persons. Every one who knows anything of the ordinary system of a parish, will be aware how much valued are clothing clubs and coal clubs: how anxious especially the wives are to save a shilling or two each week, which would otherwise find its way to the beer-shop, and if so, would much better have been thrown into the nearest pond. Now this system of provident clubs, I think, might be introduced into manufacturing towns, in order to meet a time of bad trade. What is found by experience to be productive of so much advantage, should be made general. It is already compulsory in the case of seamen, and found to work most beneficially.\* Why should not the same system be applied to manufacturers? Let a certain proportion of each week's wages, say a shilling in the pound, or a penny in the shilling, be paid

\* There are several Acts of Parliament by which (amongst other objects) *all seamen* are obliged to contribute to the support of Greenwich Hospital the sum of one shilling per month. When the seaman is on *monthly pay*, (i. e. on long voyages,) this sum is deducted from that pay; but when he is on short coasting voyages, a portion is deducted on *each voyage*. The whole sum is paid to the custom house of the ports at which the ship arrives, under the denomination of the "Greenwich Hospital Fund." But although the seaman is required to make this one payment for this ostensible purpose, the money is really disposed of in two divisions: the proportions are 1s. 3d. to Greenwich, and the remainder goes to form a *compulsory Provident Fund*, which is of the greatest benefit both to the sailor himself when sick, old, or disabled, and to his widow and family after his death. This provident fund is called the *muster roll*. When the sailor becomes sick or disabled, he is put upon this roll until he recovers and is able to work: if aged, or quite disabled, he is put upon it *for life*. If when he dies he should leave a widow and children, the widow receives the same sum as her husband did receive, (or would have received,) and each of the children receives one half of the same; the boys until they arrive at the age of twelve, the girls until they are fourteen, years. The allowance from this fund varies at different ports, according to the richness of the fund. At Newcastle-upon-Tyne it is now 4s. per month for a seaman while unable to work, and the same for his widow. At Hull it is only 3s., but

over to the provident fund instead of the workman, when in full employ, and if his employment ceases, let it be paid back to him in weekly payments. If in the course of the year he should continue in full work, let the sum deducted from his wages, be paid back to him as a bonus, and placed to his account in the savings' bank.

This provident fund would come partly out of the pocket of the workman, and partly perhaps out of that of the employer. It would in a small degree curtail the indulgence of the workman, and scarcely, if at all, limit the profits of the employer. At present the wages which the employer pays are, by many of the workmen, spent improvidently; and, when work ceases, the employer has to maintain them by the poor-rate; but according to the plan proposed, if the wages paid by the employer are slightly raised, the poor-rate will be proportionally diminished. It will also be a great advantage to the workman to have a fund to fall back on, without the degradation of becoming a pauper, and encountering the rough usage, which I am afraid paupers too frequently receive from those by whom their dole is dispensed—a treatment which, if it do not degrade, at least embitters their feelings. By the plan of the provident fund, the industrious workman, when his occupation for a time fails, will feel that he is still supported by the honest earnings of his own labour. The amount of weekly payment should be fixed by law, and bear a proportion to the sum contributed, so that the workman will receive it as his own property, as much as he would his dividend from the savings' bank. Whether each man's account should be kept separate, this, and other matters of detail, may be for con-

at Aberdeen it is as much as 6s. Independently of the above fund, there is one for seamen who reach the age of seventy years, from whatever port or ports they may have sailed. It is called the "Trinity Fund," the management of which is entirely vested in the hands of the Corporation of the Trinity House, London. From this every seaman of seventy years receives annually £2. 5s.; if he be a mate, it is increased to £4; and if a master (or captain) £6. Further, all widows of seamen having four children or more, receive for themselves and for each child 13s. per quarter from this fund. It thus frequently happens, in consequence of these payments being compulsory, that the widow of a reckless drunken sailor obtains a better livelihood for herself, and is enabled to make a better provision for her children, after her husband's death than she could possibly obtain during his life. Sailors are proverbially improvident, and it is a most happy and providential thing for their wives and families that the laws of their country can in some measure rescue some little means of support for their families from the general wreck in which the conduct of too many sailors would, if unrestrained, overwhelm themselves and all belonging to them. It would be an indescribable boon to the manufacturing districts of this country, if some such *muster roll* could be established by the Legislature; if, out of the large wages (enormous in comparison to a poor sailor's pay) which the manufacturing labourers receive in many parts of England, some such provident fund could be established and supported. After the first prejudice against a *forced* payment had subsided, English labourers in general would be glad to contribute to anything which would keep them from the dread of the workhouse.

sideration. All that is contended for here is the principle of a legal provision by a provident fund for the unemployed, distinct from the poor-rate. It is due to the workmen that some measure of this sort should be adopted for their benefit. They are placed in a highly artificial state of society, entirely by the force of circumstances, and not by their own choosing. They have nothing to do with the gluts of the market, the fluctuation of trade, and the rivalries of commerce, except that they find by bitter experience that these things press grievously on them. It is, then, clearly the duty of a Government to adopt any measures whereby these frequently recurring evils, if not to be prevented, may at least fall less heavily on our toiling population.

Besides what has been suggested, something should be done to counteract the tendency of enormous populations to accumulate in our overgrown towns. The amount of our population employed in manufacture has become too great, and means should be taken to reduce it. The most obvious method is to encourage the employment of more hands in agriculture. Formerly it was just the reverse. Our rural parishes were greatly relieved by the removal of the surplus hands to manufacture. And in those days there was not the same tendency in the population to accumulate immoderately in particular spots. Water could only afford a certain amount of power. The streams in Gloucestershire and Derbyshire were dammed up, and employed in turning the wheels of factories, and there was great demand for hands, which relieved the poor-rates in the adjoining parishes: while the factories were scattered up and down in our rural valleys. Presently when the power of steam was discovered, manufacturers congregated in particular spots, chiefly in the neighbourhood of the coal fields. Still the demand for hands continued, as our manufacturing enterprise advanced, and we know that there was a regular system of transferring the unemployed people from rural districts to our great towns. Your old liberal economists, like Mr. Hume, who in their youth observed the amount of employment and of wealth obtained by these means, do not perceive that the state of things has entirely passed away; and that a contrary process must be adopted. Hands are now superabundant in our great towns, and facilities should be afforded for their removal elsewhere.

The truth is that too much labour is employed in manufacture, and not enough in producing food. Can the Government do nothing to obviate this state of things? No, say the economists, let things alone and they will find their own level. But they do not find their own level. Want of employment increases every year. Great relief indeed has been afforded by the occupation of so many hands on railroads; but in proportion to the tem-

porary value of this relief will be the accumulated difficulty when the railroads are finished. Government will then be forced to take some measure for the employment of these masses of people.

The obvious course seems to be the cultivation of waste lands. It is an undoubted fact, that there are uncultivated lands in Great Britain and Ireland, which are sufficient for the employment and support of an enormously increased population. Why then, the economists will say, do not people cultivate these lands if they can be advantageously cultivated? There are many reasons. First, because the cultivation of land does not pay so high a profit to the capitalist as manufactures or railroads. Secondly, because there are local impediments, the expense and trouble of obtaining legal power, the difficulty of getting the persons interested to agree. There is also this special reason, that a great part of the waste lands, though sufficient to support a population, are not sufficient to pay a rent; and therefore it is not worth the while of individuals to enclose and cultivate them. Here then is a case for Government to step in. It would be sufficient for the Government if they could find employment for the population, without absolute loss; in fact the relief of the poor-rates, by employing idlers, would in itself be a very great gain. But I am persuaded that so far from being losers, the Government would obtain a very considerable revenue by the cultivation of waste lands. What may be the most advisable means of setting about this work, would require much consideration. One plan that might be suggested is this. Let a commission be appointed—or probably some existing commission or board might be sufficient—with power to value and give compensation to those persons who have an interest in waste lands. First, let notice be given them that the land must be enclosed and cultivated, and if those at present interested will do it, let them have the option, otherwise let them be paid a fair compensation for the interest which they have in the land. Let the land so acquired be placed under the control of the Commissioners of the Woods and Forests, and be considered Crown or Government land. Let money be advanced for the building of farm houses and cottages for the occupiers, providing implements of husbandry, and food for one year. After that they would maintain themselves. Let the land so brought into cultivation, be managed like any other estate: only, with reference to the great end in view, the employment and maintenance of the people, a greater subdivision of the land might be made than usual; there might be smaller farms, and cottage allotments. Perhaps your economists will say, Subdivision of land is the bane of Ireland; Ireland has a cottier population, and look at the misery which it produces. This is one of the fallacies of the economists. English cottiers

are not like Irish. Their natural character is different. English cottiers and small holders of land, where they are still found, are the most industrious and independent of our population, and in every way to be encouraged. By this plan I am confident that besides the employment given to thousands of families, it would probably be found that a very considerable income would accrue to the Government. Much land now covered with woods and forests might perhaps with greater advantage be turned into arable and pasture land; and if it were thought desirable to maintain as much wood and forest land as at present for the sake of the timber, an inferior sort of soil would, in many cases, do as well for that purpose. Then there are many other great works of improvement that might be undertaken, as the draining of morasses, reclaiming estuaries: advantage should be taken of every place in which labour might be expended profitably, or at least without loss. Thus, in a multitude of ways might employment and subsistence be found for a large population; villages, and towns would speedily spring up, and it is probable, a rental would accrue to Government, which would greatly relieve the taxes of the country. It is not improbable that many of these works might be undertaken by capitalists and speculators, and the multitudes of workmen now employed on railroads, might be gradually settled down in these newly cultivated lands. If not somehow disposed of, so that they shall be enabled to get an honest living, they will, it is to be feared, be a sad burthen to the country, as soon as the railroads on which they are now employed shall have been completed.

It is easy, as we shall doubtless be reminded, to set down plans on paper, but not so easy to bring them into effect. However, the long and short of it is that the great *desideratum* for the country is to find subsistence for the people. Relief from the poor rates is most fitting for the maintenance of the sick and aged. Profitable labour, and honest independence—a fair day's wages for a fair day's work—that is what the able-bodied workman is anxious to obtain, and what in every possible way should be provided for him. And this must be done not by any sweeping theory or general scheme, but by a variety of means which the poor are not able to devise for themselves, and therefore which Government must set on foot for them, unless they would have the land overspread with swarms of unemployed labourers, and subject the country to all the inconveniences and danger which such a state of things gives rise to.

But after all we shall never place the country in a condition of safety, or do our duty to the poor, unless we do far more than has yet been done to improve their moral and religious condition. It may safely be laid down as an axiom, that if you make men

Christians, you make them happy and prosperous; and the corollary also is true that while they are not Christians, they will be unhappy and ill-conditioned. Suffering and privation will make them turbulent and discontented. Prosperity and high wages will only render them wasteful and intemperate. The safety and peace of the country, do not depend only on physical, but still more on moral causes. I admit that great efforts have been made, in the way of building schools and churches; but still the exertions of the nation have been infinitely less than the exigencies of the times require. On this subject, as on the former, some have entertained the absurd and mischievous notion that things will right themselves, that the education and religious instruction of the people is to be provided by voluntary and local efforts. But as the frequent want of employment, and consequent suffering of the poor proves the fallacy of this notion in regard to temporal affairs; so the ungodliness which so lamentably abounds, and the absence of the means of religious instruction in so many places, shows demonstrably, that it is altogether a false policy to leave a population to itself in religious matters. It has become abundantly evident that the local and voluntary efforts of individuals, are altogether insufficient for supplying the moral and religious wants of the people.

It is a national affair and Government must assist largely in doing it, or it will not be done at all. There can be no doubt that we have come to a great crisis in our history. Large bodies of our people are demoralized, disaffected, and often unemployed. Unless we take effective measures to find them employment and wages, and not only that, but unless we soothe their embittered temper, and train them up in a more Christian spirit, a great catastrophe will happen. God has brought us through many difficulties, and may yet avert this; but His aid is given to nations as well as to individuals in proportion to the exertions which they make for themselves. Let us only do our duty, and hope for the best.

TRACTS<sup>5</sup> FOR THE  
PEOPLE.

BY SOSTHENES.

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THE SPECIAL CONSTABLE  
AND  
THE CHARTIST.

A DIALOGUE.

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LONDON :  
JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET,  
AND 78, NEW BOND STREET.

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## THE SPECIAL CONSTABLE AND THE CHARTIST.

### A DIALOGUE.

[Enter WILLIAM—He takes off his armlet or constable's badge—and hangs up his staff. Presently ROBERT comes in and throws himself into a chair.]

*William.* Well, Robert, I am glad to see you safe home again.

*Robert.* Safe! yes, safe enough, but properly tired. I have been twelve hours, at least, on my legs, pushing about in the crowd, marching here and there, and every where, sometimes jambed up till the breath was almost out of my body.

*William.* A hard day's work, and not much profit!

*Robert.* Not much, truly.

*William.* And what is worse, you have been the cause of a good many hundred others losing their time, which some of us could not well spare. I'll tell you what, Robert, these constant Chartist meetings are beginning to make quiet people very angry. We don't like to have to turn out continually to keep the peace because you Chartists think proper to make your "demonstrations" as you call them.

*Robert.* Then why do you turn out?

*William.* Because it is our duty, whatever be the risk or the inconvenience. Besides if we did not take measures to keep the peace, we should stand a chance of having our houses broken into, our property destroyed or stolen, and our families ill-treated.

*Robert.* Stuff and nonsense! The chartists are very peaceable men; at least I can speak for myself. I am for moral force, not physical force.

*William.* Yes; you may speak for yourself, but there are a good many of you who hold very different language. Look here at these extracts in the paper from the speeches of some of your leaders. Mr. G. Reynolds, who I fancy is a great gun amongst you, says thus: "A few drops of blood are nothing in the scale, and if moral means should fail, *the people were prepared for any means.*" Mr. Murphy declares that his constituents at Huddersfield were determined to have the Charter, "morally, if possible, but to have it any road." This gentleman was loudly cheered, but the cheering was "tremendous," when Mr. G. J. Harney informed the convention, on the authority of a letter from Sir G. Grey, that "a great many pikes were being manufactured at Nottingham." What are pikes for, I wonder, if they do not mean to use physical force? Look here again; Mr. Somers said, at a meeting at Liverpool, that if any attempt should be made

by the Government to put down the treasonable practices of the Irish confederates "there existed an organized conspiracy in England to burn London, Liverpool, and Manchester, and the other Babylons of England, and massacre the peaceable inhabitants." And another speaker declares "that if a single shot is fired in Ireland there is a party here prepared to destroy everything or anything." This is plain speaking enough, I think.

*Robert.* O it is all mere talk. It does very well to rouse the people up a little. But take my word for it, the Chartists do not mean to burn towns and massacre the inhabitants or anything of the sort.

*William.* You do not, I dare say, and many others amongst you have no such intention. But there are some, as I said before, that do. There is a gang of desperadoes and political madmen, who are resolved, if possible, to turn the country upside down, and will stick at nothing to effect their object. And you must excuse me for saying that you "moral-force men" are nothing more than blind tools in the hands of these ambitious fools. They get you together to make a demonstration, march you about here and there till you can hardly stand on your legs, and all this in the hope of getting up a row. Look at the extract from the speech of Mr. James Leach: "He would say nothing of physical or moral force, *but leave that to the chapter of accidents.*" The object of these men is to get you, if possible, into a collision with the police or military. Some chance shot, as at Paris, or Milan, or Berlin, will rouse you to resistance. Then when your blood is up, these men know you will fight as Englishmen can fight, and perhaps make a revolution. I think they are mistaken in their calculation. At the same time it is very possible that they may stir up such a riot as may cost hundreds of lives, and cause an enormous destruction of property.

*Robert.* All I can say is, that I have no intention whatever either to kill my neighbours or destroy their property; and if other people choose to fight, and if rogues and vagabonds take to pillaging houses, I am sure I cannot help it.

*William.* Yes, you can help it, Robert.

*Robert.* How?

*William.* By keeping quietly at home. If it was not for these monster meetings of yours there would be no danger to life or property. And I must say that if riot takes place and blood is spilt at one of them, every one of those who set the meeting on foot, or walked in the procession, is responsible for the mischief before God and his country. You must know very well, before you set out, that it is very possible there may be riot and bloodshed. It has happened in many places. It happened at Glasgow only the other day, and on the continent the most

dreadful scenes have taken place in all the principal cities. Hundreds of men have been sent to their last account in the midst of strife and anger. Many innocent women and children have been killed in the tumults. I do not see how any right-minded man can think himself justified in being in any way accessory to such events. I cannot understand how any man knowing the possibility of bloodshed, yet getting a mob together, or forming part of one under such exciting circumstances, *can escape the charge of MURDER.*

*Robert.* Come, you are speaking rather strongly. I am sure I should be very sorry to have anything to do with murder. My object, and that of a great many others, has been simply to make a *moral demonstration* in order to oblige Government to do justice to the working classes. You should have seen the stream of people that passed along the streets with us to-day. There seemed no end of them.

*William.* How many do you suppose there were?

*Robert.* Why, I may tell you as a friend,—what I heard from very good authority, that is Mr. —, who is one of the managers, and knows how things really are,—that there were about six thousand regular Chartists. These all walked in the procession with flags, six abreast. Then there were the Trades' Unions, and confederated Irishmen. But in such a demonstration there are sure to be a great quantity of idlers and spectators, which makes the number look much greater than they are. Altogether there were certainly more than fifteen thousand people, and I can tell you that so many thousand people are a very imposing sight, as they wind along the public streets. You can call them as many as you choose. The best plan is generally to add a nought at the end. So that our meeting to-day will figure on the paper as consisting of 150,000 Chartists, a tolerably good show of moral force.

*William.* And do you really think that this sort of exaggeration of numbers is honest?

*Robert.* Honest? Oh, to be sure, everything is honest in politics. Besides, it is done every day.

*William.* Well, all I can say is, that it appears to me a very dishonest and unworthy trick. But the fact is that you Chartists only deceive yourselves. If your object is to make such a demonstration of numbers as to intimidate or influence Government, you do not surely suppose that Government is content to take your estimate of numbers. No; an experienced military man, standing in one of the houses as the procession passes, can count the number within a hundred or two; or the same result may be come at by measuring the ground occupied by the assemblage. It is known to a fraction how many men can stand together on an acre of land. What then is the use of pretending that

the numbers are ten times as great as they really are? You only talk yourselves into a belief that you are a very numerous and important body, and perhaps deceive your friends in other parts of the country, who on the strength of having as they suppose 150,000 men to back them, when there is not the tenth part, might be induced to risk their lives in some rash attempt, and only get themselves into a scrape. Depend upon it "honesty is the best policy" in politics as well as other matters.

*Robert.* Well: you cannot deny that the Chartist petition ought to have some weight. I suppose there never was such a monster petition got up since Parliaments were held.

*William.* So far from thinking that your monster petition has done your cause any good, I believe that the impudence and dishonesty of the whole affair has done more than almost any other circumstance to injure you. Why the thing was a cheat on the face of it. It professed to be signed by five millions six hundred thousand men, which is several hundreds of thousands more than there are in all England.

*Robert.* However, there were the signatures of a good many women.

*William.* Yes, and children too. As a specimen, to my certain knowledge John Smith's errand-boy signed it every time he went over Loudon Bridge, and that was five or six times a day.

*Robert.* He ought to have been well whipped for his pains.

*William.* There I quite agree with you. Then there was the Duke of Wellington's name seventeen times; Queen Victoria, Sir Robert Peel, Sir G. Grey, Pugnose, Longnose, Flatnose, Punch, besides a number of vile indecent names not fit to mention.

*Robert.* Did it never occur to you, my good friend, that these names must have been written by the enemies of the Chartists who wished to bring discredit on their cause, most likely some policeman or Government spy?

*William.* Certainly, whoever wrote them were no friends to the Chartists. But I should hardly think that Government would take the trouble to do it. No; the truth of the matter appears to be that when petitions are exposed in the street, as this was, every idle vagabond that goes by scribbles on them just what he pleases. Nine persons out of ten probably do not know or care a farthing about the matter, and write down their names, or anything else that happens to come into their heads for the fun of the thing. The long and short of it is that petitions got up in this way are of no value whatever. For my own part I think Parliament ought to require all persons who sign petitions to set down their address and occupation, so that inquiry may be made as to their identity. As it is at present, one individual may set

down the names of a hundred, as appears to have been done in this instance, whole pages being evidently in the same handwriting. But I think that from the exposures made of the mode in which signatures were obtained, and the sort of signatures which were affixed, your monster petition has been shown to be such a monstrous humbug that it has turned the whole business into ridicule, and I fear has had the effect of fixing a stigma on the very practice of petitioning. So that what is in reality, when properly exercised, a valuable privilege, will in future have but little weight.

**Robert.** However, after all deductions, you must acknowledge that a petition signed by such vast numbers of persons ought to have, and must have, a great moral effect.

**William.** It does not appear to me that there is any possibility of knowing what the numbers of the *bonâ fide* signatures really were. Instead of being, as it was stated by Mr. Feargus O'Connor, five millions six hundred thousand, the whole number of every sort, men, women, and children, was under two millions; and of these a large proportion are ascertained to have been fictitious. Perhaps scarcely a tenth part of the signatures were genuine. But take them at two millions, out of a population of about twenty millions. Then you have the fact that two millions of the population want to have the charter and eighteen millions do not—that is a majority of nine to one against it. I have no doubt that if you fairly polled the country, you would find it to be the case—that nine persons out of ten either are opposed to the Charter, or else know and care nothing about it. The whole affair is got up by some busy persons in the great towns, who like to be notorious, and find it easier to distinguish themselves by political agitation, than by more honest means. But with all their agitation, they are as far from attaining their object as ever. Why should the constitution of the country be altered, when not one person in ten desires it. I must say that I think your appeal to moral force is equally a failure with your appeal to physical force. To endeavour to carry the charter by the help of pikes and rifles, would be a wicked and murderous attempt, besides the certainty of its being unsuccessful. Your appeal to moral force shows only that the large majority of the people are against you, so that you have nothing left but to appeal to reason and argument. If you, or your leading men, can prove to the country that the Charter would be an advantage, and a remedy for the evils which surround us, I have no doubt you will succeed, but not otherwise.

**Robert.** Well come, if you will listen to argument, I think I may count on bringing you over to my side.

**William.** Let me hear some of your arguments.

*Robert.\** "We hold it to be an axiom in politics that self-government by representation is the only just foundation of political power, the only true basis of constitutional rights, the only legitimate parent of good laws: and we hold it as an indisputable truth, that all government, which is based on any other foundation, has a perpetual tendency to degenerate into anarchy or despotism, or to beget class or wealth idolatry, on the one hand, and poverty and misery on the other. While, however, we contend for the principle of self-government, we admit that laws will only be just in proportion as the people are enlightened, on which, socially and politically, the happiness of all must depend; but as self-interest unaccompanied by virtue, seeks its own exclusive benefits, so will the exclusive and privileged classes of society ever seek to perpetuate their power, and to proscribe the enlightenment of the people. Hence we are induced to believe that the enlightenment of all will sooner emanate from the exercise of political power by all the people, than by their continuing to trust to the selfish government of the few."

*William.* Then though you admit that "laws will be just only in proportion as the people are enlightened, and that on this, socially and politically, the happiness of all depends," yet you would place the power in the hands of the people in their present confessedly unenlightened state,—thus, by your own admission, incurring the certain destruction of "the social and political happiness of all." This seems rather a blunder. However, go on.

*Robert.* "A strong conviction of these truths, coupled as that conviction is, with the belief that most of our social and political evils can be traced to corrupt and exclusive legislation, and that the remedy will be found in extending to the people at large the exercise of those rights now monopolized by a few, has induced us to make some exertion towards embodying our principles in the People's Charter. . . It has often been argued that Universal Suffrage, as well as the other essentials for the exercise of that right, could not be reduced to practice. This is therefore an attempt to show the contrary; and we think it would be practically found to be a simpler, cheaper, and better mode of securing to the whole people their elective rights, than the present expensive machinery, by which the rich and ambitious few are enabled to pauperize and enslave the industrious many."

\* These extracts are taken from the introduction to the "People's Charter," perfect edition, price one penny—being the outline of an act to provide for the just representation of the people of Great Britain and Ireland, in the Commons' House of Parliament, embracing the principles of universal suffrage, no property qualification, annual Parliaments, equal representation, payment of members, and vote by ballot.

*William.* Well, I confess your argument does not appear very lucid, but, as far as I make out, you consider universal suffrage to be the principal point. Am I right?

*Robert.* Yes.

*William.* No property qualification, annual parliaments, equal representation, payment of members, and vote by ballot, are chiefly "essential for the free exercise of the right" of universal suffrage; and not of any very great importance in themselves. So that what we have principally to consider is universal suffrage.

*Robert.* Well, he it so.

*William.* Universal suffrage you consider to be a right?

*Robert.* I do.

*William.* And also likely to be a great benefit, if you could get it?

*Robert.* Certainly.

*William.* Well, let us consider these two points. First, however, let us understand what you mean by universal suffrage.

*Robert.* I mean of course that all persons should have the right of voting.

*William.* Would you give women a vote, as well as men?

*Robert.* Why no, you see women don't enter much into public matters. Besides, they would be too apt to be led away, and vote according to the mere impulse of their feelings.

*William.* Very good reasons, if it be so. But then do you not see that strictly speaking you have given up your point of universal suffrage already? You disfranchise half the population by a stroke of the pen. Then with regard to children, are they to have votes?

*Robert.* No, not till they attain the age of twenty-one.

*William.* But is not that rather hard on intelligent and well-conducted young men of twenty? I think I know several young men of that age who are more fit to vote than others I could name of twenty-five, or even fifty.

*Robert.* Very likely: but then there must be a line drawn somewhere. The law and custom of the country has fixed twenty-one as the age at which the rights of manhood begin; and you must see that it would be impossible to give the privilege of voting to any who were under that age, because they were judged to be of superior intelligence to the rest.

*William.* Just so. I quite agree with you. But all this goes against your theory of universal suffrage, and at once proves that it is not a right. You disfranchise half the population, because they are not likely to have turned their minds to political matters, and would be too apt to vote from mere impulse; and you disfranchise a large proportion of the other half, many of them no doubt intelligent young men, because

law or custom has drawn an arbitrary line, and decided that they should not vote before the age of twenty-one. All this confirms the view which I have always been accustomed to take of the franchise, namely, that *it is not an inherent personal right, but a privilege or trust conferred by law*. The law of the land is, after all, what we must look to to determine the suffrage. It is not a right *independently of* the law, but one conferred *by* the law. If it be better for the interests of the country, the franchise may be still further limited by the same power. Are there not any other persons whom you would exclude from the franchise?

*Robert.* Yes, I would exclude insane persons and persons convicted of crime, especially of bribery.

*William.* Quite right; no one could object to that. But I am inclined to think that the rule might with advantage be extended further. For instance, there are many persons who, though not absolutely insane, yet act very foolishly and violently. There are many reckless improvident persons who squander all their wages in public-houses, and bring their families to ruin: others who if they had the power would pull down the whole fabric of society, and spread anarchy through the land. Such persons as these seem to me as bad as madmen, if not actually so. Then there are many ignorant thoughtless persons who have no right views of their duties and responsibilities; others who would sell their votes for a pot of beer. All these persons would make very bad voters, and bad much better be off the list than on it.

*Robert.* Perhaps so, if you could tell who are persons of this description; but it would be impossible to draw the line.

*William.* Impossible certainly to draw a correct line which should exclude all objectionable voters, and include all good ones; just as in fixing the age at which the privilege of voting should be conferred, you cannot help passing over a great many persons who are well qualified to vote, and admitting a great number of worthless persons. But, as with regard to age, so in other respects, law and custom have always endeavoured to fix certain qualifications which should be in a general way, tests of fitness for the elective franchise. The franchise has grown up with our other institutions, and should not be violently or suddenly altered. The great beauty of the English Constitution is, that it has gradually from time to time adapted itself to the circumstances of the people. The old law of the country fixed the forty shilling freehold for country voters, and conferred the right of voting in boroughs, on the burgesses or freemen. I have no doubt that these qualifications included in a general way the large proportion of the intelligence and respectability of the country. The recent Reform Bill, which I need not remind



yon was passed with the general concurrence of the nation, has fixed another standard, that is, the living in a house of the annual value of £10, which in a rough way is a tolerable test of respectability.

*Robert.* What, do you mean to say that all persons who live in £10 houses are intelligent and respectable, and those who live in smaller houses the reverse?

*William.* No: no more than I should say that all young men of twenty-one were prudent and intelligent, and all young men of twenty the contrary. But as in the case of age, you admit that law and custom must draw some fixed line, so I think it must be in respect to other qualifications. The £10 household franchise is what we have at present, and I see no reason for changing it. In large and populous towns where house rent is dear, the franchise embraces a large portion of the population. In smaller boroughs, where house rent generally is cheaper, a piece of land in any part of the borough may be taken with the house, so as to make up the amount required by law. And this I say is to a certain extent a test of respectability, and a proof that a man has a stake in the country. I do not mean to say that many persons whose houses are worth only £8 or £5, and many who have not a roof to cover them, may not be honest and intelligent; still in a rough way, as I said, which is in fact the only way in which such a business can be regulated, the living in a £10 house gives a man a character for respectability, just as having attained the age of twenty-one may be supposed to prove a certain maturity of mind. Prove to me that the making the franchise universal would add to the intelligence and independence of the constituency, and I would willingly vote for it; but I confess that until the mass of workmen get a better education than they do, and drink less beer and spirits, and go to Church more regularly, and, in short, behave altogether more respectably and properly than at present, I think it would be better not to extend the suffrage. Tell me honestly, do you think, as far as your own experience goes, that the majority of artisans in our manufacturing towns who at present are without the suffrage, are well principled and well conducted enough to exercise this important privilege with advantage to the country? and are there not also, especially in agricultural districts, many who, without any fault of their own, are not sufficiently well informed on matters of policy and government, to form a right judgment on such subjects?

*Robert.* Well, if you ask me plainly, I must say that, as far as my experience goes, a great number of the inferior workmen and labourers certainly have not education and habits of conduct sufficient to enable them to form a very profound judgment on political subjects. But then I think the question may be

regarded in another point of view. All classes ought to have their interests represented in Parliament. The working classes are at present unrepresented. Give them the suffrage, and they will send representatives who will look to their interests better than they have hitherto been attended to.

*William.* That seems to me to be contrary to the principle which you laid down just now, when you said that "self-interest, unaccompanied by virtue, seeks its own exclusive benefit." This to be sure you apply to the richer classes, but now as it seems to me, you wish to bring the same objectionable principle into operation amongst the lower classes. Suppose for a moment that all the working classes had votes, and used them with a view to what they considered their own interests; suppose the right of universal suffrage, together with the other five points, which as you say are "essential to the free exercise of that right;" suppose these to be made the law of the land: well, *the working classes being by far the most numerous, would return all the members*, and so the interests of the upper and middle classes would be unrepresented. The members so chosen would proceed to make laws for the supposed benefit of their own class, without any regard to the interests of the other classes, which it cannot be doubted, would cause the greatest confusion and disaster. What we ought always to endeavour to secure, in my opinion, is such a representation as should take care of the interests of *all* classes.

*Robert.* Well, there we shall agree. The very thing that I object to is, that according to the present system the representation is all in the hands of the upper and middle classes, and the interests of the working classes are neglected.

*William.* And therefore to remedy this evil you would have it all placed, as the Charter would place it, in the hands of the working classes. That is jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire. But I wish you would consider well whether the fact really is as you represent it,—that according to the present constituency the interests only of the richer classes are considered, and the rest neglected. My own impression, judging from the proceedings in the Houses of Parliament, is that there is every wish and disposition to attend to the interests of the working classes, as much as any. I think that, generally speaking, the members of both Houses are most anxious to do all they can to improve the condition of the working classes, and that the course of their policy is mainly directed that way. Look to recent enactments. The repeal of the corn-laws, contrary as the landlords supposed it to be to their own interests, was carried, and that with the consent of many of the landlords themselves, for the express purpose of giving the poorer classes cheaper food. The exemption of all persons whose income is under £150 a year from the in-

come-tax, is not that a proof that the interests of the poor are attended to? Look at the debates on the Ten Hours' Bill, the Health of Towns' Bill. Look at the immense sums voted for supplying food to the starving Irish. It really seems to me that there is the most anxious wish in the present Parliament to do all that can be done for the working classes. At the same time I confess that I think that the working classes themselves, and those members who are generally supposed to represent their views, do not take the best means of effecting their object. What the poor really want is employment, wages, maintenance, education, help, guidance: and what is it that your liberal statesmen would give them? Why, political rights. Instead of more bread and cheese and beef and beer, they would give an extended suffrage; instead of education they would give shorter Parliaments, instead of guidance and help, they would set them to govern the country! All this seems to me very much like giving a stone to them who ask for bread. Why do not the working classes join together in petitioning for what they really want—education for their children, instruction for themselves, wages, food, employment?

*Robert.* We hope to obtain all these things by getting political power.

*William.* Well, that seems a roundabout way of going to work, and not a very wise one either, for you may depend on this, that you will never get political power, if you agitate for it all your lives; whereas if you ask for reasonable laws for bettering your condition, there is every disposition to grant them. There could not be a better time than the present to ask straightforwardly for what you really want; you have a great many excellent friends ready to back your petition for anything that will really improve your condition. But your best friends will never assist you in your attempts to get political power, because they do not feel satisfied that, if you had it, you would make a good use of it; and I for one am inclined to think so too.

*Robert.* Well, if the working classes could really get their condition improved, I suppose they would not so much trouble their heads about political matters. What are the measures which you think we could get passed, that would really do us good?

*William.* There is a great deal to be said on that subject. We shall hardly have time to discuss it properly now; so, if you have no objection, we will postpone it for another occasion.\*

\* See Tract IV. Six New Points for the Charter.

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BY SOSTHENES.

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## SIX NEW POINTS FOR THE CHARTER.

### ADDRESS TO THE WORKING CLASSES.

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#### MY GOOD FRIENDS,

I AM one of those who grieve sincerely to see so many of you in a bad condition, and would willingly do all in my power to help you out of it.

The present seems to be a favourable time for the accomplishment of this object. Public attention has been directed to the subject, and there are many persons of all classes, many very influential persons, who are ready and anxious to assist in bettering your condition. But it must depend a good deal on yourselves.

The first thing is to know what your grievances really are; then to consider well how they may be remedied. Keep to these points and do not allow any set of men, for their own purposes, to divert your minds to other matters that have nothing to do with the question. This is an important thing for you to remember.

It is easy to tell from the very look of many of you as you go about the streets, and from the appearance of your wives and children, that you are very badly off. Many of you have ragged dirty clothes, torn, and not mended. Men who manufacture such immense quantities for other people as you do, ought surely to have good broadcloth for their backs, and good linen under it, and the same for their families. A great many of your children are without shoes and stockings, and can neither read nor write. This ought not to be. Some of you look as if you were half famished. Then again, your houses are bad—ill ventilated and ill drained. You are often much too closely packed together, for your own comfort or health or even decency.

There are other evils far worse than these, though you yourselves perhaps may not feel them so much. I am afraid you will think I am going to preach you a sermon. But, my good friends, do give a moment's serious thought to what I am going to say. You all have consciences, and I fear your consciences, at least those of many of you, are ill at ease. Amidst your earthly privations you do not feel a good hope of a happy futurity. Some of you perhaps doubt whether there will be another world at all.

See now what a dreadful alternative is before you. If there is *not* another world, all you have to look to is the poor comfortless existence which you have here. If there is another world, the case is ten times worse; at least to those who are so living that they cannot hope for a reward hereafter. What you want most of all is that confident looking forward to happiness hereafter, which shall enable you to bear your present ills patiently, and in so doing you would deprive them of more than half their bitterness.

But I will not say more on this subject. Only in enumerating your present evils, I could not omit that which is the greatest of all. However, I intend to confine myself principally to physical grievances.

Now what is the cause of your physical grievances—your poverty, and bad condition? It is this. In some cases your wages are low and fluctuating, scarcely enough to live on when you are employed, and sometimes failing you altogether. This arises from there being too many of you competitors for the same employment. In other cases your wages are quite sufficient for a decent maintenance, and, if properly managed, enough to keep yourselves and your families in respectability. But you have got into bad habits of spending all you get in eating and drinking and other extravagances. So that when evil times come you have nothing to fall back on. Where this is so, your bad condition and squalid appearance is clearly your own fault; in the former case it arises from circumstances over which you yourselves have little or no control. I hope, however, that it may be possible to find remedies for all these evils.

So then the evils of your condition are general poverty, bad clothes, bad houses, sometimes insufficient food, want of instruction, improvidence, drunkenness, and let me add (for I must do so) restlessness of mind, discontent, an evil conscience. Consider well, are not these the principal evils from which you are suffering?

I will proceed to consider first the remedies which have already been proposed for your grievances, and then I shall lay before you my own view of the case.

The remedies proposed by those persons to whom you are most accustomed to listen are the following six points :

1. *Universal Suffrage.*
2. *No Property Qualification.*
3. *Annual Parliaments.*
4. *Equal Representation.*
5. *Payment of Members.*
6. *Vote by Ballot.*

Now I must say at once that to propose these six points as any remedy for the evils under which you are confessedly labouring, is the most impudent cheat I ever heard of. It is not my intention in this address to enter into any discussion respecting the Six Points of the Charter. They may be very good or very bad, or some of them may be good and some bad. All I say is, that they cannot by possibility have any good effect in themselves to improve your physical condition. How can the "Payment of Members of Parliament" improve the wages of workmen? How can "No Property Qualification" give you better houses or coats or shoes? How can "Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage,"—constant electioneering and voting—make you more provident and sober? How can "Vote by Ballot" cause you to be honester and better, and therefore happier men? It seems clear to me that these things are in no way calculated to help you in your difficulties, or improve your condition; and those persons who tell you they will do so are only cheating you. Suppose, however, for a moment, that the Charter, if you could get it, would lead to the improvement of your condition. Still is it not evident that it would be much the best way to go at once for what will really do you good of itself. You are only losing your time in trying to get the Charter. If your condition is not to be mended before you get the Charter, I am afraid you will have to wait long enough for it; for the large majority of the nation is against the Charter. You will never get the Charter without a civil war, and most likely not then. Look at the great agitator O'Connell, who wasted so many years, and broke down a powerful intellect, in following the *ignis fatuus* of Repeal, and left his country as wretched and poverty-stricken as he found it. What might not that man have done if he had devoted his vast energies to his country's real good. My advice to you is this, to try and get what will really do you good at once, and not listen to Chartist orators and speechifiers, whose sole object is to make themselves notorious, and get influence among you for their own vain glory.

And there is another set of men who are just as bad, perhaps worse, because they ought to know better. I mean those who call themselves Radical Reformers, as Hume, Cobden, and Muntz. These men are very busy just now agitating for "Household Suffrage" and Triennial Parliaments. Have nothing to do with these half-and-half gentlemen. Better be Chartists at once. The object of these political radicals is to enlarge the suffrage just so much as to get office for themselves. Of all politicians Hume and his set are those who have done, and will do, least for the working classes. It is only a few weeks since Mr. Hume voted against even hearing the case of the poor frame-work

knitters.\* His principle is to do nothing for the working-classes, but let them take their chance, and starve or not as they may. At any rate it is quite evident that "Triennial Parliaments" and "Household Suffrage" will never give the working classes what they really want—that is more food, better clothes, better houses, education, provident and sober habits, and self-respect.

I come back then to what I said before. Don't be led aside to direct your minds to political privileges which you will probably never get, and if you did get them, would do you no good whatever; but petition for what you really want to make your condition easier.

The six points which I propose are these :

1. A GENERAL PROVIDENT FUND.
2. CULTIVATION OF WASTE LANDS.
3. COLONIZATION.
4. A GOOD HEALTH-OF-TOWNS BILL.
5. GOOD INSTRUCTION.
6. REVISION OF TAXATION.

I have set these six points down in order, and will now explain what I mean by each of them.

### 1. *A General Provident Fund.*

One of the greatest evils under which the working classes are suffering is fluctuation in trade—first a brisk demand, then in a few months a glut; high wages one week, and the next perhaps none at all. It is a very harassing and perplexing state of things for the workman, but *there is no possibility of preventing it*. You might as well attempt to control the winds and the waves. But as the sailor provides against a storm, so as to weather it, though he cannot prevent it, so should we provide against times of bad trade. At present when a workman is reduced to want, he has no alternative but to go to the Board of Guardians: and I am sorry to say that Boards of Guardians and Relieving Officers do not always treat poor workmen so kindly and considerately as they ought to do. To be sure they are spending money levied from people who are often very ill able to pay it; and therefore it is their duty to be as economical as they can. But then they might at the same time be civil and con-

\* See the debate of March 29, 1848, in which Sir H. Halford, Mr. Paeke, Mr. Newdegate, and other county members strongly urged that inquiry should be made into the bad condition of the framework-knitters, and something done for them, and Mr. Hume made a long speech, and voted against the motion, which was thrown out.



siderate. However, it is a very unpleasant thing for an honest working man to have to go before a Board of Guardians; and the way in which I would save him from this degradation (for a degradation it is) is this—I would have a general plan, sanctioned by the Legislature, by which, in good times, a small portion of each man's wages should be laid by to form a provident fund; then, in bad times, he should receive out of this fund a weekly allowance, which would be his own—earned by his own labour—just as much as if it were a dividend from the Savings' Bank. This plan is already adopted in respect to the wages of sailors, and has been found to answer perfectly, and I do not see why it should not be tried with manufacturers, or indeed any other class of workmen—but manufacturers more than any, because their employment is more precarious than that of others. Some manufacturers have good wages, some have bad. Those who have good wages will have to lay by a certain portion out of them, as they ought though there were no law to make them do it. In the case of those who have bad wages—only just enough to live upon—their masters must pay the deposit. I would have the law compulsory in all cases.

## 2. *Cultivation of Waste Lands.*

Why there should be any such thing as waste lands in England, Ireland, or Scotland, when there are hundreds and thousands of unemployed labourers, I never, for the life of me, could see any good reason. There may be legal difficulties, but surely these might and ought to have been removed long ago, for the sake of the great advantages of giving healthy occupation and wholesome food to the multitudes of families who might be profitably employed on lands at present entirely useless. What is the cause of the overcrowding of our great cities, the undue competition for employment, the close packing of houses? What but the continual influx of labourers from the country, who do not find sufficient employment in agriculture? How greatly must we expect to see this evil increased, when the railroad labourers, amounting at least to 250,000, have done their work, as they will have done before very long! What I propose is that *the Government should take the waste lands into their own hands*. Landlords have no right to object to such a measure on the score of their own interest, as they have already themselves set aside the claim of the Clergy to the tenth portion of new enclosures. However, let fair compensation be made for any vested interest, and then let the Government take all waste land into their own hands as a great public estate, employing as many hands on them as can be profitably employed, and letting them at a fair rent. There are said to be six million acres

of good land lying waste in Ireland alone, which would maintain a million families. What a relief would it be if the swarm of Irish who pauperize Liverpool and Manchester, and other great towns, were employed honestly and profitably in their own country. I have no doubt whatever that by the cultivation of waste lands not only would a great relief be given to the labour market, but that the Government might get a good rent into the bargain, which would go to ease the taxes.

### 3. Colonization.

Colonization is a very different thing from emigration. The present system of emigration is for poor families to go out independently, and land themselves in our colonies, or in some foreign country, with the chance of finding employment, and the risk of finding none. I have no wish to see the poor shovelled out of the country to shift for themselves. Colonization is quite different: it is the ancient method which was in vogue principally among the Greeks about two thousand five hundred years ago, and which ought now to be revived. When a country got too full of people, it was resolved to send out a colony. Persons of all classes joined it, not poor labourers and artisans only, but men of rank, intelligence, and capital, all agreed to go out together and form a settlement. Settlements so formed uniformly flourished, and in many cases became more powerful states than the country from which they went out. We have abundant historical proof of the success of colonization. An illustration of the nature of the plan may be drawn from an army. An army does not consist of private soldiers only, but is a body of men well officered, and organized, and provisioned, and furnished with every necessary: these men go out as a compact and united body to invade an enemy's country—as for instance, the army under the Duke of Wellington, which went to Spain when it was occupied by the French. Well—instead of going to fight with enemies, our army of colonizers would go and cultivate the country: its object would be to cut down forests, occupy lands, subdue wastes. It should be well officered, and organized, and provisioned;—only, instead of swords, give them spades; instead of bayonets, pitchforks; instead of cannon, ploughs. An army sent out in this way would soon be able to adopt Napoleon's practice, that is, to *quarter itself on the enemy's country*—and that without committing a single act of plunder. By making good use of their weapons of peace they might in a year's time, or two years at the utmost, be able to live in plenty; and so far from being a burden to their mother-country, would be a great help in taking her manufactures. I want to see Government set on foot some plan of this sort, worthy of a great nation like ours.

#### 4. *Health of Towns.*

This is another matter which must be carried through, as it has already been taken up by Government. There are some selfish people in the towns who are getting up an opposition to it; but the working classes, if they know their own interests, will send up petitions to have the bill passed.\* Perhaps some modification might be made with advantage; but a Health of Towns Bill of some sort the country must have, if they would better the condition of the poor. At present it is notorious that the houses of the poor are many of them badly built, badly drained, and badly ventilated. The cause is this. They are often run up by speculators, who build them at the least possible cost, and then make an interest of 15 or 20 per cent., which is unreasonable. The poor have no remedy against this evil; therefore the Government must step in to oblige the builders and owners of houses to make them at least decent and healthy.

#### 5. *Instruction.*

Those amongst you who are not too old to learn ought to be much better instructed in your duties and real interests than you are at present; and your children I should like to see much better brought up than their parents have been. It is quite manifest that private efforts alone are insufficient to secure for the working classes that religious and secular instruction which is essential to their well being; therefore we have a right to call on Government to come forward and assist in this important work. Government has, I think, hit on the right principle upon which this work may be done; that is, by assisting the spontaneous exertions of individuals. But, then, they must assist much more largely than they do, and avoid as much as possible all needless meddling, beyond the giving their assistance and advice. They must not interfere by compulsion, or they will only mar the work instead of helping it.

#### 6. *Revision of Taxation.*

Much good might, I think, be done to the working classes by an improvement in the system of taxation. But I must prepare you to expect that some of my opinions on the subject will appear to you at first sight rather singular. There is a dispute going forward just now about the income tax, between those whose income is derived from property and those whose income is derived from their profession. Persons engaged in trade and commerce seem to stand about half way between these parties: *their* income is derived partly from the interest of their capital, and partly from their personal exertions. It appears at first

\* Since this was written the Bill has been advancing.

sight that all these should not be taxed equally ; but the Government say that there is a great difficulty in arranging it otherwise. However, be this as it may, you workmen have clearly nothing whatever to do with the matter, as it only affects persons who have an income of £150 a-year. Either party would be very glad to have you on their side. But if you take my advice, you will keep yourselves aloof from a difficult question in which you are not concerned.

As regards the amount of taxation, I fear there is no hope that any great diminution can be made. More than half goes to pay the interest of the national debt, which it would be dishonest not to pay. Neither, indeed, would the nation be a shilling richer if they did not pay it ; because what was saved to the payers, would be lost to the receivers. The greater part of the remaining half is applied to the maintenance of the army and navy : and I for one will never give my vote for diminishing our national defences, and running the risk of having a French army landed on our coasts. For though I have no doubt whatever that we should drive them all out again, yet the trouble and expense they might put us to would be very great. I think, therefore, that with our present establishments, which are necessary for our national safety, we must not count on the diminution of taxes to any extent worth mentioning. At the same time it appears to me that in some respects the sums necessary for the public service might be raised, so as to interfere less with the interests of the working classes than at present. If I were Chancellor of the Exchequer, *I would put a treble tax on all intoxicating liquors*, and take off part of the duty from tea, sugar, coffee, soap, candles, and other articles of general consumption. I do not expect you will all agree with me in this part of my budget ; but the more you think of it, the more I am sure your good sense will tell you that *the greater discouragement there is to drunkenness and improvidence the better*. How many drunkards are there who feel most bitterly the misery and degradation of their condition !—they know that they are ruining their health and comfort, reducing themselves and their families to poverty and wretchedness, and yet cannot bring themselves to give up their darling vice. How much better would it be if the cause of the evil were less easily attainable. There is a remarkable law in America, that any spirituous liquors found in the possession of Indians are to be destroyed. The reason is, because savages have no restraint whatever on their appetite for spirits, and drink themselves to death when they get them ; and I fear too many of our own countrymen do the same. It is calculated that no less than thirty million sterling are spent by the working classes of England in intoxicating liquors ! a sum which prudently

spent would place them all in comparative comfort. At present the tax on liquors is levied so as to insure the largest consumption—which I think a wicked and suicidal policy. My plan would be to discourage the consumption as much as possible, and whatever is lost to the revenue must be made up in some other way. Any tax would be better than one that directly encourages vice.

I wish, my good friends, you would think well over my “Six new points for the Charter;” and the sooner you petition Parliament for them the better. Only take care that you do not get into such another scrape as your foolish Chartist leaders led you into about the “monster petition.” Let all the names affixed to petitions be *bona fide* names. Set down your Christian names and surnames, together with your residences, and trades, and if you were to add your age and the number of your children it would be as well. Take care that there are no “Pug noses” and “Flat noses”—no Queen Victoria and Duke of Wellington;—though to say the truth, I do not see why the Duke of Wellington should not sign it as well as any other man: for no one is a better friend of the poor than “the old Duke.” Do not pretend there are six or seven millions of names to your petition when probably there are not a tenth part. Such nonsense as this only throws a ridicule on the whole business, and makes people think petitioning all a farce. Do not think of going up all in a body with your petition, with a view to intimidate the Government; that is contrary to law; and it is not impossible that lives might be lost and property injured when such masses get together, which I am sure no sensible man amongst you would wish to see happen. Anyhow it alarms quiet people, and sets them against you, which is a pity. No; send up your petition calmly and peaceably for what you really want, and what every one must see will be a benefit to you. And depend upon it you have a great many good friends, both in Parliament and out, who will do all they can to back you and see you righted; and I think by their help a great deal may be done. That something must be done ere long all parties, except old Radical Hume and his set, seem agreed; and the sooner something is done for the good of the people so much the better.

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## ON THE ORIGIN OF PROPERTY.

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ALL men, without exception, have some property which they call their own; and which they would think it very hard to be deprived of. One man has a field, another a house, another a shop or a cottage—another lives in a shop or cottage, which is the property of some one else, but claims the ownership of the goods which fill his shop, or of the clock and bedstead, the chairs and tables and pewter plates which he has placed in his cottage. Another man perhaps has no property except the clothes on his back, and a few halfpence in his pocket. But even he, just as much as the richest man in the land, would consider himself very ill used if another were to attempt to deprive him of his property, or question his right to it. Suppose a man were to come up to me and say, "Sir, I doubt very much whether that is your own hat, which you have on. I suspect that you did not get it honestly; be so good as to show me your title, or else give it to me." I should, of course, laugh at him and say, "No, sir, if you want the hat, the onus lies on you to show that it is yours, I have possession, and shall keep it." Just the same should I say if any one questioned my title to a field, or a farm, or an estate.\*

We have then this fact, that every man has property of some sort, which he has a right to call his own, and of which no other man may deprive him, unless he can show a greater right.

Now it may be asked how did this right of property arise? How did it happen that a man can say, This is my hat, or my house, or my field, or my estate? Does history give us any account of the origin of this right of property? If so, let us get together the facts which bear on the subject.

The most ancient history we have is the Bible. The sacred volume we read principally for religious purposes, but it contains

\* This is in answer to Mr. John Noakes, who, in a pamphlet called "The Right of the Aristocracy to the Soil considered," begins his argument by laying down these two following axioms. 1. "Till one man can show a better right than another to a thing it is equally the property of all." 2. "Stolen property continues to be stolen property as long as it remains in the possession of the thief; and no lapse of time, sale, or other disposal of it, can cancel the claim of him from whom it was stolen."



also a variety of historical facts, which are very interesting and important even when not viewed with immediate reference to religion. It lays before us the origin of those nations which have since overspread the earth; shows us the germs of kingdoms and empires, and teaches us the principles of those laws, and the source and necessity of those institutions according to which civil society has been formed.

The first passage which I shall refer to is partly of a religious, partly of an historical character. It is as an historical fact that I quote it here. When GOD created the first man and the first woman He said, "Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed. . . . Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it."\* Now without reference to any religious doctrine implied in these words, we have the fact, which no one I suppose will dispute, that man has a natural right to appropriate to himself the fruits of the earth, and to "replenish the earth and *subdue* it," that is, cultivate it, and make it subservient to his uses. But then the right of man to cultivate the land implies the right of individuals to appropriate to themselves portions of it. When a man has cleared a piece of land of trees, rooted up the thistles and the thorns, and sown his seed in it, surely another has no right to come and take it from him, and it is absurd to think that the same piece of land can be occupied or possessed by two or more persons. If one man sows in it a crop of peas, another cannot come and sow a crop of beans; or if one man has driven his flock to pasture on a hill-side, another must not come and drive them away, and bring his own flock in their stead. Hence it is evident that the very right of "subduing" or cultivating or using the land, implies the right of exclusive occupancy or possession.

There can be no doubt that it was in this way in which persons originally acquired the right of property. In truth we have historical evidence that it was so. There is a very curious passage in the history of the patriarch Abraham which so remarkably illustrates the question before us that I will quote it at length and make it the foundation of some further observations. It occurs in the thirteenth chapter of the book of Genesis :

"And Abram went up out of Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle and silver and in gold. . . . And Lot also which went with Abram had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them that they might dwell together : for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdsmen of

\* Genesis i.

Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle : and the Canaanite and Perizzite dwelt then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand then I will go to the left."

Let us view this passage, apart from any doctrinal considerations, simply as a very curious historical fact or document. It brings before the mind's eye a most interesting picture of those rude and patriarchal times when the families of men were spreading themselves over the surface of the earth. It exhibits to us the first recorded instance of the *appropriation of territory*, or the acquisition of the right to the exclusive occupancy of land. Man had received the right to "subdue" the earth—to cultivate and use it for his own purposes. Here we have an instance of the mode in which he proceeded to do so.

The scene is placed in the land of Canaan,—that land which afterwards nourished God's highly favoured people, and beheld the mightiest manifestation of His power, which was the birth-place of our Redeemer, the scene of His miracles, which quaked from its foundation and was shrouded in darkness when the Son of God breathed out His soul on the Cross! O what a host of solemn recollections crowd on the mind when we think of the scenes which that land has witnessed! At the time, however, of which we speak, though it contained a few cities, in its more fertile valleys, yet was it for the most part desert and unoccupied.

Picture to yourselves, then, the patriarchs Abram and Lot just arrived from their journey, and settling with their families in the midst of the wilderness of Canaan. See them after their simple fashion searching out a convenient spot for pasturage on the banks of some mountain-stream and setting up their small camp; and, what was always one of their first cares, "building an altar unto the LORD."

The two patriarchs, though simple in their habits, were prosperous and comparatively wealthy. "Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold, . . . and Lot also which went with Abram had flocks, and herds, and tents." For a while they dwelt together in harmony, but in process of time their cattle became so numerous that the land was unable to bear them. It was in this difficulty that Abram made his nephew the offer which we have just read; "If thou," said he, "wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." Nothing could be more fair and liberal than this proposal; more free from selfishness, and from that

grasping, tenacious, covetous disposition which too often characterizes similar dealings even among friends. Lot availed himself of Abram's offer, and thenceforth the two patriarchs lived apart.

This transaction will serve to give us an idea of the state of the world in those early times, when territory first began to be appropriated. The land it seems was unoccupied when Abram and Lot arrived there. "Is not the whole land," said Abram, "before thee." They interfered with no one and no one with them; and by their wise arrangement they avoided interference with each other. It is clear that, after this formal agreement, it would have been unjust in either party to have intruded into the territory of the other. Abram had given Lot his choice, and therefore was bound to cede to his nephew the district which he had chosen. And Lot, having accepted the offer could no longer in fairness drive his flocks into the territory which he had relinquished to Abram. So far then as these two persons were concerned, the right of occupancy was clearly settled; each had, by agreement, acquired a distinct right to the land which he occupied.

But it may be asked, could these two persons thus partition the land between them to the exclusion of others also? Was it not interfering with the rights of "the Canaanite and the Perizzite," who are said to have been "then in the land." If "the Canaanite and the Perizzite" had been in occupation of the land, then it would certainly have been unjust in Lot or Abram to have dispossessed them: (supposing them to have had no divine commission to do so, as we know Abram's descendants afterwards had). But if these tribes neither possessed flocks nor herds, nor tilled the land; or if, as it seems most probable, they dwelt in a distant part of the country, I think they could not reasonably object to the arrangement between Lot and Abram. We can have no doubt that it was the great Creator's will that the earth should be overspread by inhabitants. Each family, in those early times, might settle wheresoever they found the ground unoccupied. *It was occupation and use which gave the first right to territory.\**

But in process of time, the occupiers of land gained a still more obvious, and indisputable right to the land *from the labour which they expended upon it*. In the case of Abram, we know that it was not allowed him at that time to settle permanently in the land of Canaan: otherwise he might have built a city, and so established himself. But there were various other ways of obtaining this prescriptive right to land, besides actually building on it. For instance, it often happened in that climate

\* See Blackstone's Commentaries. Book II. Chap. 1.

that in consequence of the excessive drought, the mountain streams were dried up, and the cattle were in danger of perishing from thirst. Ahram, therefore, at great labour and expense, caused wells to be dug, from which water might be at all times obtained. The labour thus expended certainly gave him a right to the possession of the wells. And it was with just reason that he remonstrated with Ahimelech,\* whose servants had violently dispossessed him of one of them. Ahimelech acknowledged the reasonableness of his remonstrance, and, professing himself ignorant of his servants' injustice, made a covenant with Ahram that he would not in future interfere with him. And they called the place Beersheba, that is, the well of the oath. But it would be absurd to say that Abram had a right to the wells only, because he had expended his labour on them and not to the surrounding land. What would be the use of the wells without the pastures? The use of the wells was to provide water for the sheep that fed in the neighbouring pastures. Deprive him of the pasture, and you destroy at once the value of the wells. Clearly, therefore, the ownership of the wells gave him a right to a portion of the unoccupied district which adjoined the wells. So Abram certainly believed, and his neighbours acknowledged his claim; for he proceeded to "plant a grove" at Beersheba, and dwelt there for many years.

There is another curious incident relating to the same patriarch, and illustrative of a different mode of acquiring property, namely by purchase. Sarah, Abraham's wife, died in a good old age. "And Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land even to the children of Heth [amongst whom he was then sojourning]; and he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me and entreat for me to Ephron, the son of Zohar, that he give me the cave of Machpelah which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it unto me for a possession of a burying place amongst you. . . . And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My Lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver: what is that betwixt me and thee? hurry therefore thy dead. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron, and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the children of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money of the merchant. And the field of Ephron, which is Machpelah, which was before Mamre, *the field and the cave that was therein, and the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about* [observe the specification of particulars: it almost reminds one of a modern title-

\* Genesis xxi.

deed : all these] were made sure unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Hetb, before all that went in at the gate of the city. And after this Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre : the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. And the field, and the cave that is therein, was made sure unto Abraham *for a possession* of a burying place by the sons of Heth." Who will say that Abraham did not obtain for himself and his heirs a full right to the possession of the cave and the field, and the trees—as he had before to the wells and the grove, and the adjoining pastures?

These early incidents are not only interesting but important. We cannot of course, after this lapse of time, trace the exact mode in which each country has been partitioned and appropriated; but we see plainly, from the facts which have been noticed, that the *right of proprietorship arose by a just and natural process*,—first from occupancy, then from labour expended in improvement; and that from the original proprietors it lawfully passed by sale or gift to others.

Another mode was by inheritance. When a man had cleared a forest, or drained a morass, or stocked a pasture—or built and furnished a house, it would surely be a very bad arrangement for the peace of society, that as soon as he was dead, his neighbours should scramble for the possession of his property. The common sense of mankind has always decided that a man's property shall descend to his children after him. It is for their families, indeed, in accordance with one of the deepest and holiest of nature's laws, that most men labour to earn property. Take away from a man the right of giving the fruit of his labour to his children, and you would destroy in him one of the most cogent reasons for exertion and enterprise.

Besides these there are other less legitimate means of acquiring property, such as by conquest or confiscation; and such property cannot be said to be rightfully possessed by those who so obtained it. But it would be absurd to say that John Smith has no lawful claim to his cottage and garden, or Squire Oldacres to his estate, because it may possibly be a portion of the land of which one of William the Conqueror's barons robbed a Saxon thane eight hundred years ago! The present owners came honestly by it, and therefore it is their lawful property. The case of the Church property, violently seized by Henry VIII. and distributed amongst his favourites, is different. Here the exact property unlawfully seized is known, and the lawful owners are known; therefore it ought to be given back to the Church for the benefit of the people, compensation having been made to the present owners by the nation, because the nation has so long sanctioned their ownership.

In the records of the ancient world to which we have adverted, we see the first traces of those laws which have been enacted and universally agreed upon for the maintenance of the right of property between man and man. The necessity of such arrangements is no less obvious than their justice. *It is the right of property which is the basis of civilization.* Suppose, for instance, that Abraham had no more right to the land than any other person, would he have been at the trouble of digging wells, of which the next comer might have dispossessed him, or planting a grove which any one who chose might cut down? Who would sow a field with grain, if another might come and reap it? Who would drain a morass, if it was only to feed a stranger's cattle? Who would build a house, if he could not be secure in the possession of it, and could not leave it to his children after him? It is this right of exclusive proprietorship—not only with a view to personal occupancy, but also with reference to the provisions for our children after us—that is the foundation of all industry, and has mainly contributed to all the improvements which have taken place in the world. Look at the worthless bog converted into rich pasture, and the wild heath waving with the golden corn. Look at the barren common, and compare it with the neat and well-cultivated cottage garden. What is the cause of the difference, but that one is held by a single occupier, the other is common to many? It is this right of exclusive ownership which has covered our land with peaceful villages, and wealthy cities, and adorned it with splendid mansions, and comfortable cottages. If the law were put down, and property rendered insecure, all these would fall to ruin, and we must again betake ourselves to the mud-cabin or the gipsy tent.

In truth, the first principle of civilized society is the protection of property and the labour of the industrious against the rapacity of the profligate and idle. There are two marked characters observable in the world; the one is the character of those who live by honest industry, are diligent in business and careful to provide for their families; these are they who in peaceable times thrive and get rich, and leave their riches to their children after them. The other sort are those who are indisposed to peaceful occupation, and desire to live on other men's labour by plunder and violence, or fraud. Even thus in the early times which we have been contemplating, when the earth was a wilderness, and the beasts of the field were the property of him who should first take them, one man would become a hunter, and live by the more agreeable and animating, though precarious occupation of the chase: another would appropriate to himself the domestic animals, would patiently tend his flock, and live peaceably on the produce. Thus while Isaac followed the occupation of his father,

Ishmael "dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer."\* Jacob again appears to have been a pains-taking industrious man, "a plain man dwelling in tents;"† and Esau "was a cunning hunter, a man of the field." Each character has its peculiar faults, and one must be protected against the other. We may blame Jacob for denying his brother the mess of pottage, except at the price of his birthright; and we may even make a law to prevent so improvident a bargain in future; but no one will say that Esau returning unsuccessful from the chase, could, in justice, snatch from his brother the food which he had prepared from the produce of his flock or his garden.

The same difference of character is apparent in every age of the world, and in some instances has settled down into national habit. The peaceful Laplander milks his herd of reindeers, while the wild Esquimaux, in the same latitude, prefers to live by the chase of the elk and seal. The savage tribes of America still gain a precarious subsistence amongst their native wilds: they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: the loom and the plough are alike unknown to them: they roast the meat which they have taken in hunting, and clothe themselves with the skins of beasts: while the industrious colonists from the shores of Europe build villages and towns and cities in the midst of the wilderness, and make the ancient forests resound with the busy hum of a thriving population. The same characters may be seen scarcely less strongly marked amongst ourselves, in the gambler, the swindler, and the poacher, on the one hand, who live by lawless and dishonest practices; and the man of industry, on the other, whether he be the rustic at the plough, the mechanic at his loom, the tradesman at his counter, or the man of letters in his study, who is diligent to provide a maintenance for his family in the station in which God has placed him.

And it is with reference to these two general characters of mankind, that the laws of civilized society have been framed. It was found necessary to protect the peaceable against the violent, and to adjust the differences which arose amongst neighbours. Hence arose the law, both criminal and civil, under which we live. The one protects the weak against the strong, the honest and peaceable against the rapacious and fraudulent; the other adjusts those differences which arise from the conflicting claims and interests of man and man.

There is another view of the origin and nature of a large portion of existing property, which will show still more strongly the absolute necessity of stringent laws for its protection, especially in an artificial state of society like the present. What I allude

\* Genesis xxi. 20.

† Ib. xxv. 29.

to is the fact, that a very large proportion of property is fictitious or evanescent. It is not that there is a certain fixed quantity of property in the world which belongs first to this man and next to that. But property, or capital, which is the same thing in modern phraseology, may almost be said to be created by the industry of man. It is constantly accruing, and is capable of almost indefinite extension and accumulation. Even land in itself is of little or no value until labour has been expended on it. A mere sheepwalk produces but a small amount of wealth, in fact without the sheep it is valueless. It is use and labour that makes the earth valuable, and covers it with useful works and dwellings, and fills the dwellings with goods of all descriptions, and intersects the land with railroads and canals. Thus does industry, so to speak, create new property. One man shall dam up a stream which before ran on heedful but valueless, and shall make it the moving power of a mill or manufactory. Another shall convert a waste into a productive garden, or cover it with convenient buildings. Consider particularly the origin of railroads. Railroads are a new property created by the accumulation of capital. A number of commercial gentlemen club together their profits, and form a railroad company. The work which they construct is so much addition to the wealth of the country, and of themselves in particular. *But all this creation and boundless increase of wealth depends on security.* Without security wealth cannot exist; or if it have already sprung up, withdraw the security and it will speedily melt away, and all the energy and industry expended on it will be valueless. If the manufacturer or the railroad proprietor has no security in the wealth which he has made, and the agriculturist cannot depend on enjoying the harvest which he has raised, the loom will cease, the land will be untilled, the railway will come to a stand still, and all the busy hands now so usefully employed will cease to have wages or food.

Such, then, is a plain statement of the origin of property, and the necessity of securing it to the owner.

To some, however, it appears that there is greater difference in property than there ought to be; while some are too rich, others are too poor: this they think ought to be remedied. A calm consideration, will, however, show, that any such scheme, if forcibly adopted, would be unjust and impolitic. First, it would be robbery to take from any man any portion of his wealth, simply because others fancied he had too much. It would be an immoral, unjust act of spoliation. Secondly, it would break in upon the security of property, and so tend to destroy or diminish the general wealth. Thirdly, it would be a check to industry, and a bar to the increase of wealth, to prevent persons



obtaining as much property as they can ; for we have already shown, that to acquire property, generally speaking, is not to take away from others, but to create what did not before exist.

There is, in truth, this very remarkable circumstance connected with wealth or capital, that *whatever a man does with his property, he is sure to benefit the community.* (Of course there are immoral ways of spending wealth which do harm, but these are exceptions.) Suppose the capitalist employs his money in making a railroad, for instance. Almost all of it is expended in the wages of labourers, fees to lawyers, surveyors, engineers, and goes to maintain hundreds of families. Suppose he prefers to put his money into the funds, the person who sold him the stock did so for the purpose of obtaining money to spend, no doubt, in some useful manner. Suppose he leaves it in his banker's hands, then the banker puts it out to some beneficial use. In fact, except by locking up his gold in a box, or burying it in the earth, the rich man cannot help employing his riches beneficially. Society is so ordered that the most selfish man who spends his wealth in mere personal indulgence, who builds costly mansions, furnishes them with every splendour, and surrounds himself with every luxury that can be imagined ; deeply responsible as he is in a moral sense for his selfish application of the wealth intrusted to him ; yet so far from enjoying these luxuries at the expense of others, does by his extravagance give employment, and the means of subsistence to vast numbers of industrious labourers and artisans.

This is the secret of the immense power and wealth of England. The country is full of capital and of rich men ; who spread the wealth which they possess throughout all ranks, and will continue to do so, so long as wealth is secure. But once render property insecure, and the fabric will vanish into thin air. And no one will know what has become of it. Commerce will cease, manufactories will be shut up, shops will be ruined, works of all description come to a stand, gold will be buried in the earth, and nothing remain but universal poverty and misery.

Thus it is evident that *the right of property must be maintained at all events*, unless we desire to see our whole social system tumble to the ground. I am very far indeed from affirming that there are not many things that want amending in our social system. All I say is, that if you once render property insecure, you will involve all classes in one common ruin.

I have in former Tracts advocated many measures that seem to me likely to improve the condition of the poor,\* measures

\* See particularly Tract IV. of the series, "Six New Points for the Charter."

for preventing their being crowded in unwholesome houses, for relieving the too great numbers employed in manufactures, by promoting the cultivation of waste lands, encouraging the colonization of healthy and fertile regions beyond the sea,—affording the working classes better instruction; in short, adopting every possible means for bettering their condition. For in proportion as I would deprecate the slightest interference with property which would render it insecure—and this quite as much with reference to the advantage of the working classes as the rich capitalist—in just the same proportion would I impress upon the rich the responsibilities of their station, and the urgent duty incumbent on them of taking every measure for the beneficial distribution of their wealth, both in works of charity and munificence, and in forwarding such plans as shall conduce to the benefit of their poorer brethren. Each has a duty to the other, which cannot be neglected without bringing ruin on both. If the poor by any ill-advised violence cause the capital of the country to be insecure, they do but draw down irretrievable calamity on their own heads; if, on the other hand, the rich neglect the duties of their position, and do nothing to improve the condition, and satisfy the crying wants of the poor, they may depend upon it, that a speedy retribution awaits them.

Justice and charity unite with their own interest in urging upon the owners of property that they have duties as well as rights and privileges.

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# TRACTS FOR THE PEOPLE.

BY SOSTHENES.

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EMPLOYMENT OF THE PEOPLE.

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## EMPLOYMENT OF THE PEOPLE.

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THE employment of the people is the great social difficulty of the present day. "A fair day's wages for a fair day's work," is a demand which bears reasonableness on the face of it: and it is one which everybody would wish to see complied with, if possible. But there is the difficulty. *Can remunerative employment be found for every member of the community?* Hitherto it has not been found; and that has proved the source of abundant suffering and frequent danger. It was amongst the principal causes, perhaps the principal cause of all, that led to the last French Revolution. It furnished, at least, the instruments by which that Revolution was effected. And yet the question does not appear to be in the least degree nearer its solution since the Revolution than before. The mass of the people are even less employed now than they were, and there is no prospect of their being otherwise.\* The same difficulty exists in England, and threatens a convulsion. But a convulsion, so far from solving the question, would only render it more complicated. It is, in truth, one which *we must grapple with in peaceful times, or not at all*. It is a difficulty inherent in human society, or rather in human nature. There are a great many evils, and difficulties, and perplexities in this world, which can never be entirely done away with, and this perhaps is one of them. Nevertheless, we ought to do all we can to mitigate them, and deprive them of their bitterness. To suppose that in the present state of the world, all members of the community can be well-doing, and that there should be no poor in the land is unreasonable. Poor there always have been, and always will be. What we have to do is to take care that there is as little want and suffering as possible—to find employment and food for the people, and improve their condition by all practicable means.

This, then, is the practical question, how to find employment for the people; and one which we will attempt to solve. First, let us advert to the notions at present current in the world respecting this great question.

There are two antagonistic systems, the merits of which are

\* Written just before the outbreak of Midsummer, 1848.

contested amongst economists of the present day; and there is a third system, which to the writer seems preferable to either.

The first system is what the French call the *laissez faire*, or *let-alone system*.

The second is the system of *constant interference*.

The third system is what I shall call the *paternal system*, and explain further when we have considered the other two.

I. First, then, let us give our attention to the *laissez faire*, or *let-alone system*. The theory of this system is to let things take their course, in the expectation that they will find their level and right themselves. This system is an especial favourite with statesmen. It saves a world of trouble. It is a short way of settling very troublesome questions. It is much the same as if the master of a family were to sit all the day long in his arm chair, and refuse to listen to any complaints, leaving the members of his household to settle all matters as they chose amongst themselves, provided only they gave him no trouble.

Thus it is with statesmen and political economists of the *let-alone school*. Let things be as bad as they may, they let them take their course, and fancy that they will come right of themselves. And so things sometimes *do* come right; and then it is thought to be a wonderful instance of sagacity not to have interfered. But the misfortune is, that often things do *not* come right, but get very wrong; and then they are said to be inveterate evils which we must put up with. The *laissez faire* politicians take it very coolly, comforting themselves with the old proverb, "What can't be cured must be endured;" when the truth is, the evil which is now so difficult to be cured might easily have been prevented, if it had been taken in time.

The principal advocates of the *laissez faire*, or *let-alone system* are the Radicals. Of all politicians, these men care least for the misery of the people. It is, in fact, a part of their system, without which it could not work at all. Misery and starvation are the very mainsprings of their economy. Gluts in commerce, wages at starvation point, are the moving causes which, in their view, work the necessary changes and modifications in the social system. They argue thus:—Supply is sure to follow demand: that is their axiom. When there is a demand for any particular article of consumption, people will be found whose interest it is to employ capital in that branch; and a number of hands will obtain work, and a number of families be fed. But when the demand ceases, that particular branch of commerce will cease to be remunerative: and when a sufficient number of capitalists engaged in it have

been ruined, and a sufficient number of operatives starved to death, or nearly so, then they will begin to think it time to remove what capital remains, together with their labour, to some more profitable business. It is of no use whatever, in the opinion of these economists, to favour or support any branch of commerce. The only plan is to *let it alone*, that it may find its own level: never mind the suffering that is caused; it may be sharp, but it is wholesome.

Now it is not to be supposed that this let-alone system is utterly and entirely wrong. If it had no foundation at all to rest on, it would not have been so generally acted on. The error of the advocates of this system is, that they push a principle too far, and apply to one state of things what is only suited to another essentially different. The advocates of this system take for granted that when employment is not to be found in one branch of trade or labour, it may in another. Well, but when this is not the case, or when the workmen employed in one trade are physically or mentally incompetent to work at others, then it is obvious that their principle breaks down, and their system is untenable. Let us consider this point more fully.

When manufactures first began to spread themselves in the wonderful manner in which we have seen them developed in late years, every place where a sufficient water power was to be found, was eagerly sought out by speculators, in order that it might be employed to turn the wheels of mills; and you might see rivulets of ink and streams of vermilion meandering through the green valleys, to the great injury of the fish and not much to the improvement of the landscape. However, there was plenty of work and wages for the people, and that was an important gain. But when the power of steam was made available for turning wheels, it was found more profitable to erect mills where coal was to be obtained without difficulty. Hence the water-mills were in many cases closed; and the hands turned adrift soon found employment by removing to the coal districts. Here the *laissez faire* system worked tolerably well, because the trade was only removed, not annihilated. It would have been useless to endeavour to force or enable the owners of the water-mills, or the workmen employed in them to continue their unprofitable labour. They must follow the trade which had sprung up elsewhere. The rural valleys were abandoned, and the families of the workmen migrated to places where employment was to be found. It was a sad change for them, but unavoidable,—to be removed from their native vales, and huddled together without elbow room in close-packed towns. If man were gifted with prescience, and could have foreseen the state of things which

has resulted from the accumulation of masses in our large towns, the last generation might well have paused before they encouraged it. However, nobody then thought of anything but 'the increase of our commercial prosperity; and the migration of manufacturers to the spots where there was ample employment to be found took place as a matter of course. Here the let-alone system apparently worked well, so far at least as the employment of the people was concerned.

But how different is the present state of things. Our great towns formed by the influx from the country, now teem with an unemployed population. Almost all trades are overstocked. All the great towns have, on the average, more hands than they require. The master manufacturers themselves are ruined by competition. Still the *laissez faire* gentlemen keep to their old maxim, "Never mind; let things alone, and they will find their level!" and so they do, after a fashion. The manufacturer, in order to outbid his competitor, endeavours to reduce the cost of his goods. He diminishes the wages of his workmen; produces an article which, with the same appearance, is of an inferior quality. Unable, however, to meet his rivals, or to find customers, he is obliged to dismiss a portion of his workmen, or work short hours, and at last becomes bankrupt and closes his establishment. But what becomes of the workmen? Why, they struggle on as they can. The best of them, perhaps, find employment elsewhere in the same business; some few turn their hands to other work. Some fall upon the poor-rate, and are set to break stones upon the road; others wander up and down the country, singing melancholy ballads; some, there can be little doubt, die from want, but so slowly, that it is not brought before a coroner, nor a verdict found of "starvation." Thus do things "right themselves," according to the doctrine of the *laissez faire* economists.

But we are getting a step beyond this in the scale of depression; things are come to that pass that they will not right themselves even in this manner much longer. All branches of trade are overstocked; workmen who cannot find employment in one branch, have no other to resort to. Poor-houses are often fuller than they can well hold; rates are overburdened, so that the payers are liable to be ruined. All means of obtaining a subsistence are well nigh exhausted, and every great town contains its thousands of unemployed persons, discontented, miserable, and ripe for evil deeds. Still, the *laissez faire* system is not yet exhausted in its capabilities. Let things alone, and they will still find their level! Yes, the natural result of the present state of things is a Jacquerie, or civil war, in which the supernumeraries shall be killed off, the property of the country be seized

by those who can get it, and the survivors of the catastrophe shall live on the wreck of the property that shall remain.

It is remarkable, by the way, that the advocates of the let-alone system, are invariably the promoters of political changes. It almost looks as if they desired purposely to keep the people in the most miserable state, in order to compass their political objects.

II. However, people of all classes are beginning to find out that the principle of leaving things to take their chance can no longer be maintained, without arriving at the catastrophe to which we have alluded. The enormous miseries that have accumulated in the country, have convinced all reasonable men, as well as the sufferers themselves, that there must be a change of system. And now arises the danger of reaction ; for in the hope of avoiding the evils that beset us, many are inclined to fly off to the contrary extreme. The wildest speculations have begun to be broached. Schemes have been propounded which, if carried into effect, will break up the whole social system, and bring in universal anarchy. One shape in which the reaction has shown itself, is the Socialist or Communist system ; a system of universal interference,—the exact reverse of the let-alone system. The notion is to do away entirely with personal independence and private interests, and competition, and property, and that all persons should live by rule in one community ; not working for themselves and their families, but for the general body. Under this system all things will be changed from what they are at present. There are to be no masters or servants ; all are to work for each other. No capitalists or operatives ; the two characters will be merged into one. All things are to be in common,—even wives and children,—according to the views of the extreme followers of this school.

The Communist or Socialist system is no new invention, but has occupied the brains of enthusiasts in other ages. It is well described by Shakspeare in the *Tempest* ; old Gonzalo says,—

“ Had I plantation of this isle, my lord,  
And were the king of it, what would I do ?

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

I’ the commonwealth I would by contraries  
Execute all things : for no kind of traffic  
Would I admit ; no name of magistrate ;  
Letters should not be known ; no use of service,  
Of riches, or of poverty ; no contracts,  
Succession, bound of land ;  
No occupation ; all men idle, all,  
And women too ; but innocent and pure.  
No sovereignty ;



All things in common nature should produce,  
 Without sweat or endeavour : treason, felony,  
 Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine  
 Would I not have ; hut nature should bring forth,  
 Of its own hand, all foison, all abundance,  
 To feed my innocent people.  
 I would with such perfection govern, Sir,  
 To excel the golden age."

This is no bad satire on the state of things which the modern Communist or Socialist talks of. M. Louis Blane, late member of the provisional government in France, propounded a scheme of this sort, and made some sort of attempt when in power to carry it out. According to the description given of it by M. Lamartine, the plan "consists in taking possession, in the name of the State, of the property and of the sovereignty of industry and labour ; in suppressing all free acts in the citizens who possess, sell, buy, or consume ; in creating and arbitrarily distributing produce ; in establishing the maximum, in regulating wages, and substituting the whole State as proprietor and monopolist, in place of the dispossessed citizen."

M. Louis Blane denies that this is a just description of his system, but does not point out how his system differs from it. "We require," he says, "that the State, as soon as it be democratically constituted, form social workshops, *destined to replace by degrees, and without assistance, the workshops of individuals.*" "Our avowed object is to undermine competition." Elsewhere he says that one of the essential requisites for his scheme is "*an education entirely new, changing all ideas and customs.*" This is a tolerably large postulate for the well working of the scheme,—"*a change of all ideas and customs!*" It is an admission that, while men are what they are, they are not fit for Communism, nor Communism for them.

The truth is, that Communism is utterly unsuited to the nature of mankind. It answers admirably with ants and bees, and beavers, and other gregarious animals. These animals live all alike ; they appear to have little or no diversity of character ; no ambition to excel each other ; no notion of improvement. The beaver's dam, or the bee's honey-comb, admirable as they are in point of ingenuity, are probably built on precisely the same model as in the first year after the creation. Besides, these animals,—at least the bees and ants,—(the beavers I am not sure about,) have no wives or families. The queen bee is the mother of the whole hive, and neither she nor the males appear to have any natural feelings of affection for one of the young grubs more than another. They labour for all alike ; equality and fraternity exist amongst them in high perfection, as if to make up for the

entire absence of liberty. Liberty there is actually none; for every action which they perform is done according to an absolute rule.

The consequence of this peculiar feature of the bee or ant community—namely, the absence of individual character, or the notion of improvement—is, that all pursue one common routine of labour year after year, generation after generation. There is no need of leisure for learned bees to invent arts and sciences. There are no philosophers amongst them, no lawyers, no divines, no schoolmasters; probably no “skilled workmen,” or rather all skilled workmen alike. Each has his precise task allotted him, and skilfully he performs it. We may take example from their diligence in performing the tasks assigned them by the great CREATOR; but to re-model our own community by theirs would be absurd. Man is entirely different by his very nature, from a member of the bee community. Instead of being all alike, no two men are alike or equal. There is every imaginable variety of character; every conceivable difference in mind and body, disposition and power, impulse and desire. Each bee goes forth in the sunny morning to his allotted task, and returns laden with his cargo of farina, which he adds to the common stock. So each man has his allotted work; but every one, or nearly so, goes to some different work,—the work of his own choosing,—the work for which he is adapted by his powers or circumstances. Think only of the population that awaken each morning in our great metropolis. Consider the infinite variety of their pursuits and occupations. Think on the exquisite cultivation and comprehensive power of some, compared with the poor ability and humble occupation of others. How would it be possible for all these to give up each his peculiar occupation, and labour according to some fixed social arrangement. Besides, man is accountable for the improvement of his talents. It is not intended that he should remain for ever rooted in one station. If the power of rising to eminence by industry or superior ability is granted to him by nature, it is his duty to avail himself of it, when he may do so fairly and honourably: and many a one who began life as a poor workman, has risen to the highest eminence.

Moreover, in contradistinction to the socialist animals, and in a superior degree to any of the most philoprogenitive animals in the creation, GOD has implanted in the heart of man a strong affection for his natural offspring, and a desire to work for their benefit. “He that provideth not for his own, especially for those of his own household, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” Not only amongst those to whom GOD’s word has been revealed, but amongst all men, of every age and

country, and faith, it has been acknowledged as a primary duty, for a man to provide sustenance for his family; to train them up, and advance their interests. No doubt each man is bound to his neighbour by the bonds of charity; but to provide for his offspring is universally felt to be a far higher claim, than to provide for strangers. Home and kindred are the most endearing names. A man who would care little for himself what he should eat, or what he should drink, or wherewithal he should be clothed, will labour night and day to secure the comfort and maintenance of those allied to him by the ties of nature. The greatest exertions of industry and genius have been made, with the object of promoting the interests and well-being of our children. To labour for the community would be quite a different thing. A man might obey the laws, and do his duty; but where would be the zeal and enthusiasm with which he labours for his family. All the energy of individual enthusiasm—all that vigour of mind, and undaunted perseverance, which leads to noble deeds and valuable discoveries,—would be lost to the community. Thus, even in an economical point of view, the commonwealth would suffer by this want of a natural spur to energy. The proper way, surely, is for all GOD's creatures to act according to their respective natures. He has decreed that bees, and certain other animals, should be Communists, and we admire them as they perform their tasks, and labour for the community of which they are members; but He has endowed men with a variety of character and aspirations after constant progression, and bound them up in families; and for man to attempt to change his nature, and live under the forced uniformity of the labourers in a beehive, would be as absurd and impracticable, as if the bees were to set up as capitalists, and think themselves capable of improving the structure of their hives and cells, and were to take to themselves each his particular wife, instead of living in the relationship in which the CREATOR has placed them to their common mother.

The Communist plan is the extreme type of the constant interference system. In fact, under it a man would be a mere machine, without individuality, or interest, or liberty, or will of his own. But there are many modes of interference short of this extreme case, which are, more or less, ill suited to men under any circumstances, much more to those imbued with the prevailing notions of liberty and independence, or even rational and constitutional freedom. Men will not brook interference with their particular pursuits and objects. It is not wholesome for them always to be interfered with; and yet some interference is necessary, in order to remedy the enormous evils of the let-alone system. The question is, what is, and what is not, undue

interference? And that must be decided according to the circumstances of each particular case; and if rightly decided, will bring us to our third system, which we have called the *paternal system*.

III. The paternal system is the mean between the *laissez faire*, or let-alone system, and the system of constant interference. Its definition or description is this,—*to let things alone when they are going on well, and when they are going on ill, to interfere and set them right*. This system approves itself to common sense. It is, in fact, the system acted on by the common instinct of mankind, until political economists arose, and perplexed the world with their theories. It is the principle of all law. So long as men do what is right and just of their own accord, there is no need of the interference of the law for the punishment of wickedness and vice; but when the strong oppress the weak, and the cunning overreach the simple, then law steps in to prevent these evils. There have been periods in the history of most countries, when the law has been set at nought, and every man has done what was right in his own eyes; and the only rule has been the maxim of Rob Roy,—

“There is a simple plan,  
That they shall take who have the power,  
And they shall keep who can.”

This is the *laissez faire* system broadly acted on. The inconvenience of such a state of things has obliged men to enact laws for the protection of society. The let-alone system of modern economists is an attempt to exempt the transactions of commerce from all restraint, so that, in this department, the weak and the simple shall have no protection against the strong and cunning.

“Those may get who have the power,  
And those may keep who can.”

“Every man for himself, and God for us all.” “Competition is a murderous lottery; well! so much the worse,” say they, “for those who draw blanks.” Such are the hard unfeeling maxims of the *laissez faire* economists, which are working incalculable evil, both moral and political; hardening men’s hearts against each other: raising up a wide-spread disaffection; endangering the peace of society: and, even in an economical point of view, entailing much loss on the community, from the simple circumstance of the loss of the labour, for which no employment is provided.

Here, then, has arrived an occasion for interference. But does it therefore follow that we are entirely to change our system?

Because the *laissez faire* system, and unlimited competition, have resulted in suffering to the community, are we, therefore, to go to the direct opposite, and become Communists? No; for we have already shown that Communism has in its train equal, if not greater, evils, and causes greater loss of available energy than even the present state of things. What, then, is the alternative? Why, surely to set to work, and do our best to improve the system under which we are living, and remove or check the evils which have intruded themselves into it. By letting things alone too long, we find that they are getting wrong. In the headlong race of competition we find, that, while some win great prizes, others are distanced; while some get rich, others are reduced to abject poverty: and it is manifest that, however wealthy the nation may be in a body, it cannot be said to be in a healthy condition while so many are in poverty and affliction. This we must endeavour to obviate.

There have been various remedies applied in different æras of the world to this inequality of fortune. In the middle ages, when the population was less dense, the alms of the Church were the chief support of the destitute. This was most commendable; the very object of the divine ordinance of poverty is to call forth charity. Charity must ever be the chief remedy of human ills. When the monasteries were abolished, and the Church otherwise impoverished in the sixteenth century, it was found necessary to enact a Poor Law, which from that time to the present has been the legal refuge from positive want. Without interfering with individual exertion, or checking the run of competition, the Poor Law is a sort of *solatium victis*—a consolation to the losers. It provides that those who are losers in the race of life shall not perish because they are unfortunate. But the Poor Law is of necessity hard. If it gave too largely to the indigent, it would discourage exertion. Besides, what it gives to the destitute is taken from the community, many members of which are scarcely better off than the receivers of relief. Hence the Poor Law is of necessity hard, grudging, and imperfect, and needs supplementary remedies to make up its deficiencies. Though a necessary infringement of the *laissez faire* system, it is not in itself a sufficient remedy. Besides, it is a relief only to those who have become poor; what we most want is something to prevent them becoming so.

Now there are two methods in which remedies may be applied to the present evil condition of the mass of the people; first, by adapting your remedy to the particular disorder; secondly, by improving the general condition of society. Thus, if a man has a bad leg, you may in some cases stick a plaister on the wound, and it will heal kindly; in other cases you must look to the ge-

neral health of the patient, and improve it, before a local cure can be effected. A few years back there was a great discontent in the mining districts, in consequence of the Truck system. The master colliers obliged the men, on pain of dismissal, to purchase goods at particular shops, where they paid an exorbitant price for bad articles. The *laissez faire* economists said, Oh, this is only a private arrangement between the employer and the employed; what have we to do with it? Let them alone, and they will adjust the matter between themselves! But it so turned out that they did not adjust the matter. Great discontents and breaches of the peace ensued. The colliers refused to work; the iron foundries could get no coal; whole districts were in commotion. Here, then, was a case for authority to step in, which it did by an Act of Parliament, and abolished the Truck system; a system in itself essentially unjust. The consequence is that there has been scarcely any interruption of the peace in those districts ever since.

The same sort of thing happened with regard to the coal-whippers in London—men who unload the coal vessels. When a vessel came to its station, it was the practice of certain public-house keepers to contract for the unloading it, and to pocket a large portion of the sum which ought to have been paid to those who did the work. The consequence was, that the coal-whippers refused to work, and London might have been unsupplied with coals, the operations of the kitchen suspended throughout the metropolis, and the inhabitants half starved with cold and hunger. But the Legislature interfered, and relieved the coal-whippers from this grievance; and they are now as peaceable and loyal a set of men as any in London.

It is observable, how very often the discontent of particular classes arises from the interference of middle men, who screw them down, and intercept their wages and profits. Under the let-alone system, the poor have little or no protection against these extortions. The case of the framework knitter is peculiarly hard. Contrary to the practice in other manufactures, the stocking knitters do not congregate in factories, but work at their homes—which so far is a great advantage. But the grievance is, that they have to find their own machines, and being too poor to purchase them, they are obliged to hire them at an extravagant price from persons who make a profit of 40 or 50 per cent. Here, then, is a case very analogous to the Truck system; and several members of Parliament have called on the Government to interfere. Mr. Hume and the let-alone economists, however, have persuaded them to take no steps to remedy the grievance; and as the poor framework knitters have not the

power of cutting off the supply of coals from the metropolis, or throwing a whole district into riot, it is probable their grievances will not be attended to, unless benevolent persons step forward and move public opinion on their behalf.

After all, however, local remedies of this sort are generally slow in operation. It is a long time before public attention is so fixed on them, as to insist on their removal. The Ten Hours Bill, which relieved children from their heavy burdens, was many years in forcing its way through Parliament. The Health of Towns Bill is meeting with much opposition; but there are able, energetic, and charitable men who have devoted themselves to improving the condition of the people, and whose influence is, we trust, daily increasing.

But the principal evil to be contended with is not any mere local disorder: a general morbidness exists throughout the whole system. There is an undue accumulation of labourers in our great towns; an excessive development of the manufacturing system. In proportion as this evil is universal, so, in some respects, is the remedy more easily applied. The evil is the want of employment; the compulsory idleness of vast numbers of able bodied men, which is at once the cause of grievous suffering to themselves, and a loss of the value of their services to the community. Well, then, is not the remedy obvious? *In whatever way you can devise healthy occupation, and a sufficient maintenance for any number of the working classes, in like proportion you relieve the pressure from the labour market*,—just as a few ounces of blood taken from the arm relieve the whole body from its repletion. The employment of large bodies of men on railroads has been almost a providential circumstance of temporary relief. But as this occupation must needs cease ere long, it is most important to find employment elsewhere for our still increasing population. There are many ways in which remunerative employment might be found, if persons of influence would but turn their minds to it in earnest. It is computed that there are no less than 14,700,000 acres of waste land in the United Kingdom; that is to say—

|                      |           |
|----------------------|-----------|
| In England           | 3,454,000 |
| In Wales             | 530,000   |
| In Scotland          | 5,950,000 |
| In Ireland           | 4,600,000 |
| In the British Isles | 166,000   |

“Assuming that one-fourth of the quantity might, when reclaimed, be brought into annual wheat culture, we have 3,675,000

acres so disposable, which, even in the present inefficient state of husbandry, would produce, at thirty bushels an acre, 13,781,250 quarters of bread corn,—a supply equal to the necessities of two-thirds of the entire population of Great Britain.”\*

Whether this be a perfectly accurate computation, or not, is of little moment; every person's experience and local knowledge will testify that there are very large tracts of land all over the country which are now lying entirely waste and unproductive, and which if cultivated might give employment and food to large bodies of persons. I speak of common lands, not land belonging to individuals. When land belongs to individuals, the probability is, that if it were worth anything, it would be cultivated; but in the case of commons, there are often legal difficulties in the way which have the effect of preventing the cultivation of very sound and valuable land. Employment and food might be found also in draining large tracts of morass, reclaiming estuaries, establishing fisheries. What we want is some efficient board of management, having authority to set these various schemes on foot, and find employment for the people wherever it may be remunerative. Nor have the Government any excuse for neglecting the promotion of such schemes, on the score of want of funds, because in very many instances, the produce of the undertaking would pay an ample interest on the sum required to effect it.

Then there is the immense outlet by emigration to the boundless regions beyond the seas, which, if rightly used, might be made to give employment, food, and comfort, to vast bodies of our people.

But in truth, it may be doubted whether, if this subject were taken up practically and energetically, it would be found that so very much was needed to be done, as first appearance seems to show. Take the case of a single parish by way of illustration. Suppose there is ordinary employment for 100 labourers, and the wages are twelve shillings a week; but unfortunately there are 105 labourers in the parish. Well, the unemployed five, rather than have no wages, offer to work perhaps for the inadequate wages of ten shillings a week, and so displace five of those who were before employed at twelve shillings. The five who are displaced are then obliged to consent to labour for ten shillings, and so displace five more. And so this process of deterioration runs the whole round of the parish, and all the labourers in it are obliged to work at insufficient wages; and so become discontented, and in a really bad condition. How is this to be remedied? Clearly, if you could set the five super-

\* Fleming's Policy of a National System of Agricultural Statistics.



nummeraries to work on a piece of waste land which would support them, you would prevent all this unwholesome competition, and consequent misery. Just so, by finding remunerative employment for two or three hundred thousand people, the labour market might be relieved, and things go on in a regular and healthy course.

This, then, is the true theory with regard to the great question before us, the Employment of the People. Do not fancy that you can re-cast human nature in a new mould, and turn into a hive of Communists, beings who were created with an infinite variety of capabilities and aspirations. Let nature take her free course, subject, of course, to the restraints of conscience and religion. Do nothing to check that spirit of industry and enterprise, which is a part of the character of man, and in no nation so well developed as in the sturdy English. Encourage, by all means, that natural and praiseworthy desire which an honest man feels to provide for his family, and advance their interests; and which is the mainspring of the devoted exertion which has enabled Englishmen to take the lead in every branch of human enterprise and advancement. Do not check this honest competition: let the race still go on, and let those who can, win the prizes; *but have pity on those who are thrown out in the race of life*; look charitably on their condition. Do not let the rich and successful speculator look down on the poor but honest man, who perhaps from no fault of his own, but from the course of circumstances, has drawn a blank. He may be, after all, in some respects a better man than the other. Even in an economical view, it is a mistake to allow the energies of any to be wasted in idleness. Every idle man is so much loss to the community. Find employment suitable for all. If you cannot find it for all, find it for as many as you can. And there are thousands of unemployed, and consequently discontented men who, though worsted in the race of competition, and compelled to remain amongst the poor of the land, may yet do good service to their country, and perform their duty in that state of life to which they have been called.

# TRACTS FOR THE PEOPLE.

BY SOSTHENES.

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THE DESTINY OF NATIONS.

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## THE DESTINY OF NATIONS.

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LITTLE as the religion of Mahomet is in vogue in this part of the world, there is one doctrine of that religion which is very widely prevalent amongst us, and that is a sort of fatalism or belief in destiny. It is a very common feeling amongst many, that the course of the world has a prescribed destiny, or fixed career, which it must needs follow out. People talk of the "march of events," as if things proceeded of their own accord; they forget that as every regiment or army has its commanding officer, who directs or stops its "march," so the events of the world are under the control of One Who guides them according to His will. Many scarcely recognise this superintending power, and speak as if they thought the world went on of itself. As regards our own country, for instance; some people believe it is advancing onward by certain steps to great improvement and perfection; others, perhaps the more numerous, imagine that we have attained our culminating point of wealth and power, and are now descending with more or less rapidity to inevitable ruin and revolution, like some noble vessel which has lost its sails and rudder, and is drifting on a lee shore; or to use the less dignified illustration of Professor Porson,

"Like a pig that down a river doth float,  
And at every stroke cuts its own throat,  
So is England's commercial prosperity."

Some persons, again, though they suppose revolution a settled thing, yet think that we may possibly get over it without absolute ruin. Nothing they conceive can stop the course of democracy. Democracy is our destiny; yet we may perhaps be so fortunate as to slip gradually and smoothly into it, without any very great calamities. These persons appear to be more credulous than the former. If revolution does come, it will come with a vengeance. Once break down the authority of law in this country, and not "all the queen's horses, nor all the queen's men," will be able to set it up again. The state of society amongst us is such, the ramification of interests so complicated,

that any disturbance of the governing power can scarcely take place without the most tremendous disruption. Opinions are so equally balanced, the national character so stubborn, the upper and middle classes have so little notion of giving up their property and other advantages without a fight for it, that it is impossible a revolution should be effected in England until after an intense struggle, which shall convulse the whole nation, and subvert society from one end of the kingdom to another. So that they who expect a revolution, must prepare themselves for one of the most terrible description—bloody, entire, and universal.

There are other persons who imagine that the world is marching on at a great rate in intellectual improvement. The advancement in arts and sciences they take to be a proof of a great expansion of the human mind; and they fall into the belief that a generation which can invent railroads and electric telegraphs, must needs have made similar advances in the knowledge of politics, religion, and other moral subjects; forgetting that the two classes of subjects are entirely unconnected; and that a man may be a very good mechanic, yet a very bad politician or divine.

The believers in "the march of intellect" commonly imagine that the advancing wisdom of mankind will be shown in the development of what is commonly called liberal policy. For instance, free trade measures, they think, will certainly be adopted more and more. They assume that restrictions in such matters are obsolete, and free trade is an advance. They do not consider it to admit of a question whether freedom of trade is really an advance and improvement or the reverse. It appears not to occur to them that the removal of the regulations, which our ancestors placed on commerce, may be possibly a retrogression towards barbarism, instead of an advance in civilization. Certainly the nearer nations are to the savage state, the less are they troubled with restrictions on commerce, the more unfettered is their trade. I do not, however, wish to express an opinion on this subject. My object is simply to give an instance of the bold manner in which the advance of certain principles is set down as a matter not to be questioned; when a previous question might be raised as to whether the movement were not in truth a retrogression rather than an advance.

To dwell for a moment on more serious matters. A great number even of intelligent people speak with apparent approval of the advance of religious liberty; meaning thereby the multiplication of sects and schisms, as if some great improvement were being made in the system of things. They do not stop to inquire whether this very circumstance is not in reality a deterioration

of all that is good and holy—a manifest departure from the spirit of unity inculcated by the Divine Founder of our faith.

Thus in various departments do men fancy that there is a current of events, whether for good or evil, which will certainly flow on. There is a sort of destiny, they think, in human affairs, which must run its course; and whether it be an advance or a decline, is equally inevitable.

Now if this were a mere opinion it would be of small importance: men might hold it or not as they thought proper. But it is one of those opinions that have great practical efficacy. As prophecy will often work its own fulfilment, so a strong opinion or expectation of what is about to happen, contributes not a little to the result expected. It operates not only on the minds but on the conduct of most men. Some it encourages, others it paralyzes. When a man is firmly impressed with a conviction that what he hopes and longs for is about to come to pass, he throws himself in the stream of events with an abandonment, and sometimes even fanaticism, which makes him do the work of a hundred, surrounds him with adherents and instruments, into whom he infuses his own devotedness, and so a great step is made towards the accomplishment of the object in view. Thus the republicans of Paris have been working with a marvellous perseverance and faith, until they have accomplished a revolution. Though comparatively few in numbers, their fanaticism and confidence in their cause have overborne the wishes of the large majority of the nation. It is a great stroke of policy in such persons to create an opinion that what they strive for will surely be effected. The presentiment of coming events is apt to paralyze the good, and indispose them to use exertions for the prevention of what they have been persuaded to think inevitable. And so it comes to pass, that what men consider an inevitable destiny, whether it be in the shape of a revolution or social change, or whether it be merely the advance of a certain policy, is in reality worked out by the enthusiasm and confidence of one party, brought to bear upon the cowardice and faint-heartedness of the other.

What I propose to do in the present paper, is to show from an induction of historical facts, that there is no destiny or certain progress in human events; but rather that they are subject to a law of *oscillation*, that is to say, they move backwards and forwards like the pendulum of a clock, or like the tide of the sea; sometimes one set of opinions is in the ascendant and sometimes the opposite: and that the course which events take in any particular age or generation, depends, under Providence, on the exertions of the then existing race of men.

Now first in respect to liberalism or the reverse, which is the

advance and which the retrogression? Does history teach us that the tendency of nations is towards monarchy or republicanism? Looking first at ancient history, we find that large portions of the earth have for thousands of years been governed by monarchs more or less absolute. The only nations which in times past stood pre-eminently forward as republics were Greece and Rome. Now had the theory been true which supposes that democratic opinions are always on the advance, would not those republics have continued to advance, or at least have maintained their advanced position? But no, we find that after a short experience of democracy, these states relapsed into monarchical rule. The states of Greece, after countless revolutions and ages of turmoil, succumbed to a foreign yoke. Rome fell into internal anarchy, and the effusion of blood was stopped only by a military despotism. Certainly the examples which ancient history affords us, furnish no great proofs of either the permanence or advantage of democracy. They rather teach us that democracy contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

Our own country presents a striking illustration of the principle of oscillation. The absolute power of the Tudors and Stuarts stirred up the opposition of the Puritans, and ended in the destruction of the monarchy under Charles I. The licence of the Puritans succumbed in its turn to the military tyranny of Cromwell. Then came the reaction of the Restoration, when kingly power was again in the ascendant, again to be abated by the Revolution of 1688. We are now under a constitutional monarchy, and long may we remain so. This form of government secures on the whole the greatest amount of good with the least evil. It has in it also the largest element of permanency, for though opinion still vibrates, its oscillations are confined within the narrowest limits; and instead of bringing about violent periodical revolutions, show themselves more innocently in the alternate party triumphs of Whigs and Tories.

France in its recent history exhibits a similar oscillation of the pendulum. The arbitrary power and regal pomp of Louis XIV. and his successor, came to its crisis in the reign of the amiable Louis XVI., when the pent up disaffection of generations burst forth in the eruption of 1789. The reign of Terror, which was the climax of the Revolution, prepared men again for the absolute power of Napoleon, and for the restoration of legitimacy. Legitimacy again proving a burden to the fickle nation, was replaced by the constitution of 1830. That again having gradually changed its character to more absolute power, was again subverted in 1848: and now by a fresh turn of the pendulum, Cavaignac and Algerine law are in the ascendant.\*

\* August, 1848.

From all this it will be manifest that the notion of the course of events advancing in a regular and uniform order; the idea of human society marching onward with a fixed destiny towards republicanism, is a theory altogether unsupported by facts. On the contrary, history presents to us a continual succession of oscillations, or backwards and forwards movements. Sometimes the one principle is in the ascendant, sometimes the other. And the theory of oscillation is quite in accordance with the philosophy of human nature. Those indeed who believe in "the march of intellect," in the sense that the human mind is advancing in moral as well as physical science, may consistently hold the doctrine that as the world grows older, men will be more able to govern themselves, and need less of external authority. But the moral or political advancement of the human mind is a theory entirely unsupported by facts. On the contrary, the most advanced republicans of Paris are in conduct mere savages, in politics madmen, more fit for strait waistcoats than self-government; and exhibiting no signs whatever that they are ever likely to establish even social order, except under the stern guidance of authority. The notion of advancement therefore entirely fails both in theory and practice. Change, not advance, is the principle of human affairs; and that such must needs be the case is evident, when we consider their inherent faultiness. The truth appears to be this. In all worldly arrangements there is inherent evil. Man's nature being itself evil, all his plans and schemes partake of that evil. He is ever endeavouring to escape from it, but cannot. There is evil in monarchy. Monarchs are fallible men, and the best cannot always act rightly. Subjects suffer, as they suppose, under control and interference. They see mischiefs and inconveniences which they fancy they could remove if they had power and liberty. They do not consider that to remove the evils under which they labour, might be only to subject themselves to greater. They long for the removal of present evils, and hope everything from a change. Hence under monarchies which are at all despotic, there is a natural desire and consequent tendency to free institutions. And sometimes such institutions work themselves out gradually, and sometimes they are the effect of a violent revolution. Then comes a reaction, for free institutions are equally or even more tainted with the imperfections of man. Men are found unfit for the liberty which they have gained; unable to govern themselves. Confusion and disorder spring up. Then comes the desire for repose under the shelter of authority. And when this is attained, liberal opinions begin to work, and the same course is played over again. The fact is that man and everything connected with him is incapable of perfection, and equally incapable of rest.

We go round our weary cycle only to begin again, and prove at each change our inherent imperfection.

Thus we have shown, then, both from the philosophy of the case, and also from an induction of facts, that human society, instead of advancing in any fixed course, or being ruled by any onward destiny, is subject rather to oscillation; that is, that the tide of opinion ebbs and flows,—sometimes setting-in in one direction, sometimes in the opposite.

But now we come to another important fact, viz., that these oscillations, or tides in human affairs, are subject to every sort of variation and irregularity. The oscillation of inert matter, like the pendulum of a clock, is uniform: it swings to and fro, ding-dong, ding-dong, at uninterrupted intervals. But the oscillation of human events depends on the free agency of man, and therefore is liable to infinite variation. Events are sometimes suspended for centuries,—sometimes hastened on in a few months or weeks. There are in truth always existing in society, two antagonistic principles,—the one the principle of order, the other of anarchy. Sometimes the anarchical principle is scarcely visible, or visible only in the occasional crimes of individuals against property and life. At other times the anarchical principle is all but ready at any moment to burst forth. A nation may go on for years and generations like a dormant volcano, and some conjuncture of affairs, some sudden furor, some neighbouring example, may precipitate an explosion.

Thus, in another point of view, it is evident that there is no fixed destiny of events. The course of events depends on a variety of circumstances. The first French revolution might have burst forth much sooner than it did: the seeds were sown long before they sprang forth. Or it might have been indefinitely postponed; perhaps altogether prevented. There were many points in its course where it might have been arrested; or at least have been guided into quite a different direction. It began with difficulties of finance. Had the privileged orders consented to share the burdens of taxation with the people, as their sovereign called on them to do, matters might have been arranged. Had the king not been induced to adopt the perilous expedient of calling together the States-general; had he, when they were called, firmly insisted on the separation of the three Estates, instead of their union in one assembly, the democratic principle would not have attained a legal ascendancy. Had the Estates, on their part, accepted the liberal constitution which the king offered them, France might have settled down into a constitutional monarchy, without passing through the bloody scenes of the Reign of Terror. Lastly, had the king put himself at the head of his army while they were yet loyal and devoted, he might



have retained his crown and head. The first French revolution, like most other similar events, was the result of a series of blunders on both sides. It is true that when passions are excited, and the loyalty of a nation corrupted, great evils must be expected to fall on a country. Still the intensity of those evils—the direction which they take, and the final result, depend, under Providence, on the agency and instrumentality of man. There is, perhaps, no period at which a bloody revolution may not be brought on by mis-government and weakness, or may not be averted by skill, and prudence, and courage. It is scarcely too much to say, that, as the calmest state of society contains within it the embers of mischief, which might be fanned quickly into a flame, so the most turbulent and corrupt state may be kept from convulsion for years and generations, and the seeds of evil gradually removed by human vigour and foresight. Thus was the overthrow and captivity of Judah suspended during the reigns of the good Hezekiah and Josiah. Who knows but that revolution may have been averted from England by the honest and patriotic character of George III. and his advisers, and that the fate of the nation, at this moment, may depend, under Providence, on the courage and prudence of our present rulers?

What we would particularly impress on the minds of our readers, is this: that we ought never to be secure of continued prosperity; never to despair of the safety of the country; never suppose that safety or ruin is inevitable; never think that we are drawn into the fatal influence of the cataract, and must infallibly be precipitated over it. Both history and philosophy teach us that there is no such uncontrollable destiny in human affairs. The sky may look very gloomy; every moment we may expect the bursting of a storm. But how often does the darkest cloud pass away after a few heavy drops have fallen. So when national ruin seems all but arrived, the gloom may gradually subside, and the sun again shine forth.

There is, however, yet a deeper view of the question. We must not forget that there is an Almighty Ruler at the head of affairs, Whose will is the real arbiter of events. That will, however, is not irrespective of human conduct. In the record which we have of His dealings with one nation, which is in truth but an example of His mode of government of others, we have abundant evidence that His favour or displeasure, and consequently their happiness or misery, depended on their own conduct. Hear the words of the great founder of the Jewish polity, with which, before his departure, he addressed his people—"It shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all His Commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on

high above all nations of the earth : and all these blessings shall come upon thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy GOD. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. . . . The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face. . . . The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto Himself, as He hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the Commandments of the LORD thy GOD, and walk in His ways. . . . But it shall come to pass if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy GOD, to observe to do all His Commandments, and His statutes, which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land ; the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. . . . The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation and re-buke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly, because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken Me.”\*

Then follows a dreadful enumeration of the curses which should overtake them if they persisted in their disobedience. The whole history of the Jewish nation is an illustration of this prophetic sentence ; and we have no doubt that the rule of providential government, which is here depicted and recorded, in reference to one people, is the rule by which the Supreme Governor directs the destinies of the world. Human conduct determines His favour or disfavour ; human instrumentality works out His decrees. At the end of the last century, the French people rose against their rulers, overturned their government, and were in consequence punished with many years of the most grievous suffering, under a reign of terror so grievous and tyrannical, that no man held his life by a day’s tenure. During the same period, the English responded to the voice of their legitimate rulers, and cherished a spirit of loyalty, which bore them comparatively unhurt through one of the most stormy periods of the world’s history.

The same good spirit, we may trust, is still in the ascendant amongst us, and will again, under God’s good Providence, save us. The difference of the character of the two nations has been strongly marked on two recent occasions on which it has been tested, and the result of the difference of conduct on those two occasions is so manifest and striking, as not only to afford a

\* Deut. xxviii.

confirmation of our theory, but to furnish a most important practical rule of conduct. On the 23rd of February last, the French people were aware of a threatened insurrection. When called on by authority to suppress it, instead of flocking to their standard, the National Guard of Paris either suffered the populace to have their way, or actually joined them in their lawless proceedings. The consequence has been that from that time to the present they have been in constant peril from the spirit of anarchy, which was then allowed to gain the ascendant. Their property has been gradually destroyed, their persons have been exposed to manifold perils. Peaceable citizens have been obliged to leave their occupation and to keep watch and ward for days and nights, and to engage in murderous conflicts with an armed populace; and it is to be feared that their punishment is very far from being yet completed. Never was there a more striking judgment on disobedience and disloyalty.

Look now at the conduct of the English people on the 10th of April. When similar disturbances were threatened in London, instead of holding back from their duty or countenancing the disturbers of the peace, the citizens of London though perfectly untrained to the use of arms, came forward and offered their services without reserve; and by the mere exhibition of their power, put down the anarchists. There cannot be a question that had the mob gained the upper hand on that day, it would have been the beginning of a series of troubles of which no man could foresee the end. And make what deduction we please on the score of personal interest, selfish fear of the loss of property, and so forth, yet there is no doubt that the leading feature in the movement of the citizens of London on the 10th of April last, was a conscientious obedience to the law, a resolution to do their duty; and now they are enjoying the reward of their loyalty in comparative safety and security.

Such is the reward of loyalty for which, blessed be God, the English people are still conspicuous. I do not say that they have not many grievous faults, for which God's judgments may be expected. Their self-indulgence may be corrected by famine, their careless living by the terrors of pestilence. Appropriate chastisements are apportioned to particular sins. Yet it may be safely said that so long as the English people maintain the spirit of loyalty and obedience to the law, and courage to defend the right, they will be at least exempt from the scourge of revolution.

There is no destiny in human events, except that which a nation shapes for itself.

8  
TRACTS FOR THE  
PEOPLE.

BY SOSTHENES.

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THE RED REPUBLICANS.

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## THE RED REPUBLICANS.

SINCE the first bursting forth of the great political convulsion of recent years,—the French Revolution of February last—which has been productive of such wide-spread consequences throughout Europe, and bids fair to give birth to others even more important,—we have thought it our duty to publish several papers on the social state of both France and England, such as we hoped might tend to place these momentous events before our readers in their true light; and we have reason to believe that they have not been without their use, in directing the minds of many persons to sound and true principles.

During the progress of the last few months the aspect of affairs has somewhat changed; or rather, the real principles from which the recent disorders have arisen have become more clearly developed. The form in which the revolution of February appeared, was that of a rooted aversion to a particular dynasty, which generated in the middle and upper classes a disloyal spirit, and a consequent backwardness to repress the insurrection of the mob, as it was their duty to have done, and as they might have done with ease at first. In our first number, we strongly warned the middle classes of this country against a similar dereliction of duty. We pointed out that, if disorders arose in England, the most frightful calamities would ensue, and that the preservation of the country depended, under God's good providence, on the determination of the middle and upper classes to do their duty, in maintaining the public peace. We joined our voice to those who called on the "respectable" classes to stand up manfully for the maintenance of law and order. The result has been what we hoped. The peace has hitherto been preserved, and we trust will continue unimpaired.

At the same time, we have always expressed our decided opinion, that it is not enough to repress disorder by the strong arm of the law; but that it is the duty, both of individuals and of government, to do all in their power to remedy the evils which really affect the poorer classes. The evils of which the poor complain are partly real, partly imaginary. While we would strenuously support such measures as may relieve the wants of the people, and give them better food and clothing, and more regular employment at fair wages,—while we recognize the justice of the claim of "a fair day's wages for a fair day's work,"—we at the same time have done all in our power to refute and discourage those visionary doctrines which are current in the minds of many, respecting the necessity of great political and

social changes in the condition of the people. We have devoted several papers\* to a minute examination of the theories of Chartists and Socialists; and, as we trust, have furnished in a short compass such plain and irrefragable evidences of the futility of both, as, if placed in the hands of an honest and reasonable man, cannot fail of convincing him of the folly of endeavouring to better his condition by any such means. In so doing, we have treated the Socialist and Chartist as reasonable men, who believe that the schemes which they uphold are really calculated to benefit the country. We have argued with them as men who desire to respect the rights of others, as well as to obtain what they believe to be their own; and we have no doubt that there are many men amongst them of this description,—men who have embraced the tenets of Chartism and Socialism, from the honest conviction that such plans, if brought to bear, will add to the welfare of their country, and remedy the evils under which it is suffering. Such persons, we trust, will read our arguments with candour, and give them that attention which we believe they deserve; and we would take this opportunity of requesting our friends to assist us in getting these tracts into the hands of the people.

But there is another class of persons to be considered. The course of events within the last few months has brought to light the fact, that under the name Chartists, Socialists, Communists, and the like, there is a body of men whose objects and principles are very different from those which we have described. It has transpired that most of the leaders, and many, it is to be feared, of their followers, are men actuated by the most diabolical designs, banded together to subvert society, prepared to put to death all who oppose them, and to have a general scramble for the property of the community. These men have come to be designated by the appropriate name of Red Republicans. In France there are many who avow that name; in England it is to be feared there are not a few who have imbibed these principles. When we consider that ruffians like these, though few in number in comparison with the rest of the community, yet may, by the apathy of the better-disposed, or by some unfortunate conjuncture of circumstances, accomplish their object, it is obvious that we ought to have some clear notion of their intentions and resources.

Red Republicanism is no new idea. It is in fact one of those lurking atrocities or fiendish propensities, which always exist in human nature, and are brought to light when circumstances favour their development. The desire of plunder, the will to slay and seize, and lay waste, will always be found amongst mankind. In various ages of the world it has shown itself, in the inundation of barbarous hordes, who have forcibly invaded peaceful

\* See Tracts by Sosthenes, particularly Nos. 2, 3, and 4.

territories, and have committed all sorts of atrocious villanies and rapines. Our own Saxon, Danish, and Norman ancestors are more or less liable to these charges. The conquest of a country is seldom unaccompanied by the most fearful crimes. Almost any army of men, if uncontrolled by authority, will commit the most savage barbarities in a conquered country. Red Republicanism, properly so called, is the springing up of this rapacious spirit of indiscriminate plunder and violence in the heart of a nation,—the aggression of one part of the community upon the lives and property of their neighbours, without pity or remorse. It is accompanied usually by some wild fanatical notions of freedom and equality. Feroocious outbreaks of this description have taken place in various ages and countries. Wat Tyler's insurrection in the reign of Richard II. was of this character.

“A ragged multitude  
Of hinds and peasants, rude and merciless,”

rose against the upper classes to plunder and massacre them. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Treasurer, and others of high rank, fell victims to their rage. It was the intention of the insurgents to massacre the king, the nobles, and all the educated classes, especially the lawyers, for whom they had a strong aversion; to burn London to the ground, and divide the country amongst them. In the same times occurred the Jacquerie, in France, when the people in several provinces sacked and pillaged the castles of the nobility, committing the most horrible outrages on the nobles and their families. Similar atrocities prevailed in different parts of Europe. There was a sort of revolutionary ferment; an attempt of the lower classes to mend their condition by the destruction and pillage of those above them. The result of such attempts, if in any degree successful, is like that of the irruption of a horde of barbarians—to utterly destroy public security, render property and life unsafe, break up all domestic happiness, and throw back civilization by many degrees.

The most flagrant instance of this spirit in modern times was the French revolution of 1789, of which, in fact, recent events are but the sequel. In 1789, and the following three or four years, the nobles and middle classes of France, by their selfishness and cowardice, allowed the mob to get the upper hand, and to run riot through the land. Then was the carnival of Red Republicanism; all the fiendish passions of human nature had their full career. The amiable king and his family were dragged in procession from Versailles to Paris, surrounded by the vilest refuse of the Parisian populace, who carried the gory heads of the king's guards on poles before his carriage. All, of whatever

station, who at any time opposed the progress of democracy, were summarily put to death, drowned, shot, hung on lamp-posts, their hearts not unfrequently torn from their bodies, their ears worn as cockades in the hats of the murderers, who are said even to have drunk their blood. The prisons were crowded with persons of all classes, and the cowardly mob went round to them, and in cold blood massacred the helpless prisoners. Hundreds of thousands of persons were killed in street conflicts, riotings, civil strife, or put to death by *fusillades* and *noyades*; that is, wholesale shootings and drownings. 1,022,351 men, women, and children, including persons of all conditions of life, nobles, priests, artisans and their families, are computed to have been destroyed during the ascendancy of the Red Republicans. Meanwhile there was a general scramble for property. No one could call his possessions his own for a single day; the greater part of the property of the country was forcibly taken from its possessors, and appropriated to public purposes, or seized by demagogues. This system arrived at its height in the time of Robespierre, the principle of whose government was to condemn and execute all who opposed his influence, or were even suspected of opposing it. Every day saw cart-loads of persons, of every age, sex, and station, sent to the guillotine. At last, the authors of these atrocities, by a just retribution, put each other to death, and a short respite ensued.

Red Republicanism assumed a new aspect under the guidance of Napoleon. Instead of allowing the Red Republicans to cut the throats of their fellow-countrymen, his principle was to send them to other countries to cut the throats of their neighbours. Under the rule of Napoleon, the days of Attila and Genseric revived. The French armies spread themselves over Europe, kindling, wherever they went, the same ferocious spirit; pulling down dynasties, subverting empires, seizing, confiscating, pillaging, and devastating. At length the indignant nations roused themselves to vengeance, and drove the tyrant from his bad eminence.

After the fall of Napoleon, order reigned for a while in France and Europe; but it is not to be expected, when a demoniacal spirit has so long been loose in the world, that it can be at once allayed. The revolution of 1830, and the recent one of 1848, are fresh symptoms of this accursed spirit. Red Republicanism assumes various disguises, and uses all sorts of subterfuges. It is not often that the ruffian abettors of this doctrine avow their real object: if they did so, the feeling of self-preservation would impel the majority to resist them. The avowed pretext in 1830 was to drive out the Bourbon dynasty; as soon as that was accomplished, the reins of power were grasped by a sort of provi-



sional government (for the government of Louis Philippe was in reality nothing more). No sooner did it assume to itself any real authority, than it again became the object of attack and conspiracy, and was displaced in February last by the same instruments by which it had been first set up,—namely, a brutal and ignorant mob, led on by the Red Republicans. But the Red Republicans did not find the nation ripe for the re-establishment of a reign of terror. They acquired, however, what was to them of vast importance, the free liberty of preaching their doctrines, and of possessing arms. The clubs established in February last were used, like the Jacobin clubs of the end of the last century, as the means of lashing the people into madness, and spreading amongst them the most blood-thirsty principles and atrocious designs. In a very short time, multitudes of demoralized ruffians were worked up into such a pitch of murderous excitement, as to desire nothing less than to pillage Paris, and massacre all the possessors of property. It was this fiendish fury which burst out on the 27th of June. A great part of the city of Paris was seized by the Red Republicans, and the most extensive preparations made to obtain possession of the government. The fanatics fought with a courage worthy of a better cause. Had they eventually succeeded, Paris and France, indeed all Europe, would have become a pandemonium: pillage, massacre, and civil war, would have overspread the land. But by this time the nation knew the danger with which they had to contend: the upper and middle classes fought manfully for their lives and property, and to save their families from ruin and degradation. After a four days' conflict the most cruel and unmanly, because it was fought in the midst of a dense population, multitudes of whom were defenceless against its horrors,—at last, when hundreds and thousands of lives had been sacrificed, the government finally prevailed over the Red Republicans, and threw about twelve thousand of them into prison; thence to be brought to trial for the mischief they have done. It was a great triumph to the cause of order: the serpent is scotched, though, it is to be feared, not destroyed; the fiendish spirit is so ingrained in the minds of a large portion of the people, and those who are not infected by it are so feeble, vacillating, and infirm of purpose, that it is impossible to say how soon another struggle may ensue.

The truth is that the nation is suffering Divine vengeance for their sin of rebellion; and no sin so surely brings its own punishment with it as rebellion. Whether their punishment shall be shortened or not, depends probably on the use which they make of the respite afforded them.

Such is the lesson afforded to us by the passing history of ill-fated France. We must not consider it inapplicable to our-

selves; our case, thank God, is not parallel to that of our neighbours, in respect to the intensity of the evil; but it is to be feared that the seeds of Republicanism, and that in its worst type, are not unsown amongst us. Give the cluhs in London, Dublin, and our great cities, full scope to preach revolution for three months, and to arm themselves, *ad libitum*, and we should soon see the country in as bad a state as France. In truth, circumstances have recently transpired, which show that this devilish spirit is more developed, even among ourselves, than was supposed. People have been accustomed to view the Socialists and Chartists as misguided men, who had taken certain crotchets into their heads, which, though mistaken, were harmless enough, because it was impossible that they should be brought to pass. It could do no harm for Socialists to join together in forming benefit societies, and establishing a community of goods among themselves, provided they did not interfere with the property of others. Chartists might preach their five points till doomsday, provided they did not seek to enforce them otherwise than by moral arguments. It was not suspected till lately, that, under the pretext of these dogmas, many amongst them were aiming at a violent subversion of our institutions and government; that pillage and massacre were actually advocated; in short, that Red Republicanism had made considerable progress amongst our dense population.

The speeches and doings in Ireland were the first evidence of the lengths to which the advocates of these doctrines were prepared to go. Under the specious plea of Repeal, it was found the Communist principles had spread far and wide. The great obstacle to the views of the Irish fanatics was the English army. When therefore it was found that these could not be tampered with successfully, the next object was to exterminate them. "Here," said the mad leader of rebellion, "are fifty thousand English troops, the first thing we have to do is to destroy them." Taking their tactics from the Red Republicans of Paris they began to form cluhs, and preach rebellion, and arm themselves for the conflict. Meanwhile, a conspiracy was detected in England, the object of which was to cause a diversion on this side the Channel, so that assistance might not be sent to the army contending with the Irish rebels. We have witnessed such tremendous convulsions in almost every capital in Europe within the last few months, that the abortive attempts of the Chartists in our own country have rather excited contempt than apprehension. And yet we remember the time when the country was thrown into an agony of excitement by the discovery of the Thistlewood Gang and the Cato Street Conspiracy, the design of the one of which was to murder the

ministers of the crown at a cabinet dinner; and of the other to seize the Tower of London, and arm the mob from its arsenals. Neither of these conspiracies, bad as they were, can be considered as more atrocious and alarming than the conspiracy detected amongst the Chartists within the last few weeks. The object of the conspirators was no less than to set fire to Liverpool, Manchester, and London, and spread rebellion and pillage through the land. The whole thing was so summarily suppressed by the police, and produced so little excitement that we scarcely give it the attention it deserves. It is almost unfortunate that the affair did not make more noise. Even the facts are scarcely known. But they ought to be known, and thought of. It appears that the conspiracy, and the time of its breaking out, had been communicated to the police, who, at a fixed time, repaired to the resorts of the conspirators in such force as to arrest them without difficulty. Eleven men were found in deliberation, and arrested at the Orange Tree public-house, near Holborn. Twelve others were seized at the Angel public-house, Blackfriars-road. Another gang was taken at Blue Anchor-yard, Westminster. These different gangs, in concert with each other, were armed with pikes, three-edged daggers, and swords, and provided with fire arms, ball cartridge, hand grenades, tow, turpentine, and other combustibles. Some had provided themselves with breastplates and cuirasses. In short, there is no doubt that there existed a conspiracy of desperate fanatics, whose design was, on that very night, to have issued forth, and under the pretext of making a procession, to have got together a mob of people, assassinated the police, and plundered and set fire to various parts of the metropolis. If their project failed, they expected to have been able to escape in the confusion. If it succeeded, London might have been the scene of a three days' conflict, and though we may not fear that the insurrection would not have been eventually put down, yet the mischief done might have been enormous,—greater, probably, than that which took place at the Lord George Gordon riots in the last century. The same scenes were to have been enacted at Manchester and Liverpool, and other populous places. At Liverpool, the shipping was to have been fired. At Ashton, a gang of conspirators actually issued from their dens into the street, and seized and murdered a policeman, before the authorities were prepared to disperse them.

These facts ought, we say, to be more considered than they are. They prove, at least, that Red Republicanism exists in England under the assumed name of Chartism. We should be sorry to include all Chartists, or nearly all, under the name of Red Republicans. A great many of the Chartists, no doubt, are honest men, who have been led to believe that they are un-

justly used in not having votes, and imagine that if votes were given them, the country would be better governed. We think they are mistaken in both these points, and have given our reasons in former numbers. However, those who endeavour by fair argument to propagate their opinions are not to be confounded with that section of the Chartists who are in league with the rebels of Ireland and the Red Republicans of France. These men must be dealt with in a different manner. It will not do to suffer them to organize themselves into armed clubs, and inflame the people with seditious speeches. The experience of France is sufficient to prove to us that the unlimited liberty of preaching revolution is calculated to work up an ignorant populace to the commission of almost any crime. No government whatever can stand such a system. No government can subsist for long that allows democrats openly to preach rebellion, and supply themselves with arms. It is the duty of those to whom the execution of the laws is confided, to protect the community from annoyance and danger, by summarily putting down such proceedings. But then arises this difficulty. The fanatics of revolution, debarred from the public promulgation of their doctrines, resort to secret conspiracy, and organize themselves clandestinely; and government will have to contend with a concealed instead of an open enemy. This is the way in which the Red Republicans of France accomplished their objects in February last. They were organized and armed, and watching their opportunity, when a general discontent was rife amongst all classes, they took advantage of the excitement, and overturned a government which was supposed to be the strongest in Europe. We have seen times in England when discontent has been very general, and a single spark might have ignited the country. Who can remember the strike of 1842 without dismay? or who can tell how soon a scarcity, or a pestilence, or a commercial panic, or an unpopular government, may afford opportunity to the Red Republicans of England to make another attempt. We are far from thinking that the populace of England are so excitable as those of France; nor do we think that the middle or upper classes will succumb to mob rule, as the National Guard of Paris did. Still it behoves us always to remember that, humanly speaking, the government of Louis Philippe seemed to be built on a rock, and yet a single day proved it founded on the sand. "Let us not therefore be high-minded, but fear."

The question then is, what we are to do, in order to avoid the danger which in such turbulent times must always threaten even the strongest institutions, and communities in many respects better circumstanced than our own. We answer, that a government, to be secure, must always look to the well-being of the

people. And as the government of this country is virtually based on the constituencies, it becomes the duty of every member of those constituencies—that is, all the influential, educated, and respectable people in the land—to consider themselves, in a great degree, responsible for the acts of the government, and for the way in which the lower classes are dealt with. We must never let the government rest until they have provided for the temporal and spiritual wants of the people. Employment and instruction, these are the great desiderata. If the people could obtain them for themselves, or if benevolent individuals would do it for them, then there would be no need for government to interfere. But now, since this is not the case, since want and ignorance abound everywhere, it is not safe for any of us to sit with our arms folded. The Red Republicans will surely one day be upon us, if we suffer our lower orders to be uninstructed and unemployed. If charity does not move us to exert ourselves to improve the condition of the people, we must be constrained by fear. What good Christians do from the holy principle of love, worldly men must be forced to do under the penalty of certain ruin. Nay, even good men need a little of this wholesome excitement. Good men are too apt to let things take their course. Good men, while they mourn for the sinfulness that abounds, do not perhaps realize how much the demoralization of the people depends on the neglect of those who ought to do more for them. We are accustomed to think that the poor especially in our great cities are demoralized, and the middle and upper classes are comparatively sound. We do not sufficiently consider that the demoralization of the poor implies a corresponding demoralization of the rich. It is a proof of intense selfishness, carelessness, and ungodliness, that in a country so abounding in wealth as England, the lower classes are not far better looked after, both as regards their temporal and spiritual condition. The fearful condition of foreign nations, and the turbulent state of our own, ought therefore to be taken as warnings, to all who have influence or means, that they must bestir themselves for the improvement of the people amongst whom God has placed their lot.

What we desire to see are not only pecuniary efforts—though these are essential—but also personal exertions, and a kindly interest for the welfare of the people. We admit that there are many bright examples. There is a vast amount of good done in a quiet unostentatious manner, and God will reward those who do it. Still when we consider the enormous means of the country, the wealth, the talent, the leisure, the various advantages of the higher classes, and when we contrast with them the misery, the ignorance, and demoralization of so many of the

lower, we feel that no further proof is needed that infinitely more might be done than is done, and that until the country, both government and individuals, is roused to a sense of the necessity of ten times greater exertions than any that have been made hitherto, the nation cannot be considered from week to week in a secure condition.

We feel that in thus strongly urging upon the rich, the educated, and influential, the need of exertion on their part, we may appear to speak as if the blame rested solely on them, and as if we thought that the poor were not equally responsible. But we desire to make no such comparison. On the contrary, we maintain that all classes alike need amendment. If the rich are self-indulgent, so also are the poor, in at least an equal degree. Who can see the beer-shops and gin-palaces which overspread both town and country; who can witness or read the accounts of the scenes which are continually taking place in those dens of iniquity; who can glance at the narratives of the criminal cases that are brought before our magistrates and our judges, without being convinced that the vice and ungodliness of the lower classes has arrived at a pitch, such as England, perhaps, has never before witnessed? But it is superfluous to enlarge on this painful subject. Our sole object in adverting to it is to show that, while we have to thank God for hitherto preserving us from revolution, we have no right to count on exemption from its horrors, unless we bestir ourselves diligently to remedy the enormous evils which exist. We may boast of the best constitution in the world, of the purest Church, of the noblest aristocracy, the most enlightened gentry, the most respectable middle classes, and even of the most industrious workmen; we may survey with pride the spectacle which has been so recently witnessed, of our beloved Queen, whose personal character we so highly and justly respect, congratulating our nobles and our representatives on the suppression of outrage, the attachment of the nation to its laws, and on the proud place which England occupies as arbitress amongst the nations of the earth. Still with such horrible depravity existing in our streets; while the plague-spot of unchecked demoralization still rankles in the heart of our great and wealthy cities—yes, and we fear in our rural districts also—we have no right to hope that we shall for ever continue exempt from the scourge of revolution, which is but one form of punishment which an offended God, sooner or later, inflicts on a nation which disregards His laws.

Socialist Argument for equal distribution  
of Property - from the literal interpretation of  
Luke III. 11 "He that hath 2 coats, let him  
impart to him that hath none."

Now, if one passage of Scripture may be  
interpreted thus literally - so of course  
may any other. The Socialist or Chartist therefore  
who feels that a great injustice has been  
done to, and a great robbery committed on  
"the masses" of this country, will not try to  
regain what he has lost - on the principle  
given in Luke VI. 29-30. & Mat. VII. 39-40. 41.

again - the Chartist - must be consistent  
object to any such relationship as between  
"Master & Employed" - &c on the principle  
implied by the literal interpretation of  
Mat XXIII. 8-9-10.

again. He would never invite his friends to a  
meal - see. Luke XIV. 12-13.

